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THE PHILOSOPHY OF CHRISTIANITY

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PREFACE

SOME time ago the author determined to introduce a course in THE PHILOSOPHY OF CHRISTIANITY into his department of Systematic Theology which included: Christian Dogmatics, Christian Apologetics, Christian Ethics, and Christian Psychology. The course comprised in this book belongs to the section known as Christian Apologetics.

At once, however, he was confronted with the difficulty of finding a suitable textbook for his purpose. It is true, years ago several works on this theme were published which may be said to be classics in their line. We refer to the following treatises: *The Philosophy of the Christian Religion,* by A. M. Fairbairn; *The Philosophy of Revelation,* by H. Bavinck; *The Christian View of God and the World,* by James Orr. These works deserve unqualified praise. They are soundly evangelical, and at the same time scholarly and profound.

But they are not well adapted for textbooks in theological seminaries, although they should by all means be used as supplementary reading books. They are too bulky for textbook use, and evidently were not written for that purpose; therefore the material is not conveniently arranged and classified for handling in the classroom.

Consequently, the author decided to deal with the subject in an annual course of lectures to his seniors. The result is the present volume. The lectures were delivered without manuscript, but have now been written out in full for this treatise.

While this work has been primarily prepared for textbook purposes in theological schools, the author hopes that it may

also appeal to general readers who are desirous of realizing in as penetrating a way as possible the beauty, consistency and adequacy of the Christian system of truth and salvation.

It simply remains to be said that, while reason is used continually in this volume, the author is anything but a rationalist. He never thinks of placing human reason above Christian faith or the Christian revelation. His position is this: Given the Divine and inspired revelation of the Christian system in the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, he sincerely believes that the system can be shown, by the reason thus enlightened, to be coherent, rational, adequate and true.

L. S. K.

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The Philosophy of Christianity

CHAPTER I

PROLEGOMENA
(Introductory Data)

I. The Purpose of This Work.

The aim of this treatise may as well be frankly stated at the beginning. It is to show that the system known as Christianity is a philosophy; that it is an adequate philosophy; and that, furthermore, when it is examined in all its fullness and depth, it is found to be the *only* adequate philosophy.

This is the positive purpose in the mind of the author of this work. On the negative and critical side, his aim will be to prove that all humanly devised systems of philosophy leave in their wake a large, phantom-like plus sign, signifying that they are insufficient; that they leave many important facts unexplained and unaccounted for, and that these unexplained facts are often qualitatively among the most important values for human well-being and happiness.

It must be candidly acknowledged that the objective thus outlined is a high one. Some persons may fancy that it is far too ambitious an undertaking, and even displays presumption on the part of the author; but his *apologia* is at

hand: he does not claim to have worked out his thesis fundamentally by his own wisdom or smartness; he has been guided by the revelation which God has given in the Christian Scriptures. Without them he would feel that he was groping in darkness in trying to deal with the great problems of philosophy.

His position, briefly stated, is this: Unaided human reason could not have *discovered* the divine philosophy set forth in the Scriptures; but, once it has been revealed in the Sacred Book, enlightened reason can show that it is rational and basic; that it affords an adequate explanation of the cosmos and all its varied phenomena.

II. The Attitude Toward the Bible.

The Bible is the Source Book of Christianity for this age, as for all ages since the canon was completed. Besides, all evangelical Christians accept it as authoritative and trustworthy on all the subjects of which its writers treat. The Bible, it is true, does not reveal everything; it does not impart all knowledge; that was not its purpose, else there would be nothing left for man to discover by his own efforts; but when the Bible *does* speak, evangelical Christians believe that it tells the truth, whatever the subject with which it deals — natural phenomena, history, providence, morality, salvation, temporal and eternal values.

The author of this work is frankly evangelical. He accepts the Bible at its face value. He feels no need of rejecting any part of it. However, he hastens to say that his confidence in the Bible as a record of special divine revelations is not the result of blind faith, but is based on many years of investigation, study, and, most of all, experience. We say *experience* advisedly; for it often occurs that what reason leaves uncertain experience makes sure. Christian faith gives

reality to things hoped for and furnishes proof of things not seen (Heb. 11:1).

To allay any possible feeling of prejudice or suspicion in the reader's mind, the author makes haste to add another important explanation: He does not in this book hold forth the Bible as an authority that must be accepted or dire will be the consequences to the unbeliever. His temper of mind is not couched in such a minatory phrase as, "You must accept the Bible or be forever condemned!" Rather, he would describe his attitude in this way: For the time being, granted that the Bible is God's Word, to see whether its philosophy is not rational and adequate; and if it is, it ought to be accepted by the rational mind as tentatively true; then the proper means should be earnestly employed to obtain by experience the assurance of its message of truth and salvation. That is, reason's conclusions should attain to positive certitude through experience. That is the Biblical way: "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall *know* of the teaching, whether it is from God or whether I speak from myself" (John 7:17); "If ye abide in my Word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall *know* the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31, 32).

III. Christianity Primarily a Religion.

It should be remembered that Christianity is primarily a religion; and, moreover, a religion of redemption. It is not primarily a philosophy. Let us note some of its outstanding features as a religion.

1. It provides a way of salvation from sin. Through repentance for wrong thoughts and deeds and faith in Jesus Christ, men may have their sins pardoned and the thralldom of sin removed.

2. Christianity imparts to penitent believers a new dy-

namic for righteousness. This effect comes to them through the office work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration; and after this spiritual new birth (also called conversion), they continue to receive help from the Holy Spirit for growth in the divine life — that is, in progressive sanctification.

3. By the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit, operating through the Word of God, penitent believers receive the inner assurance of pardon, salvation and truth. This inner testimony of the Spirit is known as Christian experience (Rom. 8:16, Amer. Rev.). Of course, many pious persons have received this experience without any knowledge of Christianity as a philosophy; yet even their precious experience is based on the theistic World View, although they have not reasoned the problem through and have never subjected it to conscious analytical processes.

4. With sin pardoned, and the love of its pleasures removed, and a new spiritual life implanted, union and communion with God are established. In Christian theology this union is known as *unio mystica.* This is another basic element of Christianity as a religoin — personal fellowship with God.

5. As a religion, Christianity has also the following characteristics, which, to economize space, need only to be mentioned: it comforts men in sorrow, strengthens them in temptation, uplifts them with high inspirations, fills them with joy, imparts to them peace of mind and a sense of security, and upbuoys them with the assurance of an eternal future destiny.

Now, many Christian people realize all these religious experiences in and through Christianity without thinking of it as a philosophy whose primary purpose is to give a rational explanation of all phenomena.

However, a true and universal religion, such as Christianity claims to be, must appeal to all of man's powers of mind; therefore, it must touch and satisfy man's reason as well as his faith and emotion. We believe it can be vindicated at the bar of reason, and is, therefore, more than only a satisfying religion; it is also a satisfying philosophy. And this shall be the main theme of the present treatise.

At this point an orderly orientation of our subject requires a new and somewhat elementary section.

IV. Some Definitions and Explanations.

1. *Definition of Christianity.*

Christianity is that conception of God and the universe which is set forth in the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and which is centered in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Evangelical believers regard this conception as above described as a perfect system of truth and salvation. Although our knowledge of it is progressive — for the more it is studied and experienced the more wonderful it becomes — yet, in and of itself, it is static and complete.

Sometimes the term *Christianity* is confused with the term *Christendom.* The former term designates that perfect system of truth and salvation which is revealed in the Holy Scriptures, as has been above defined; whereas the latter term refers to the whole body of people who are more or less influenced by the Christian religion. Of course, Christendom, being composed of fallible people, is far from perfect, as the most orthodox Christian is ready to admit.

2. *Definition of Philosophy.*

Philosophy is a rational attempt to set forth an adequate

World View.[1] It might be well to say the same thing in somewhat different phraseology: Philosophy is a rationalized effort to give an adequate explanation of the universe and all its varied phenomena.

Of course, if philosophy is looked upon as a matter of mere speculation, as an intellectual exercise of mere academic interest, or as a feat of mere dialectical gymnastics, and not as an earnest search for truth, then it is not a worthwhile discipline, and Christianity will have nothing to do with it; for Christianity is a serious matter, and aims to reveal and convey eternal verity to the human family. We use the term philosophy, therefore, to designate an earnest and painstaking discipline in which the primary motive is the discovery of the truth.

3. *Personalism in Philosophy.*

By this term, "Personalism in Philosophy," we mean the same thing as Theism in religion. The idea is that back of and in all things there exists a Personal Being — God; that the universe cannot be explained adequately without assuming and proving that a Personal God is its Creator and Preserver.[2] This view will be upheld in the following pages. Besides, we shall add the word "Christian" in featuring our philosophy, calling it: THE CHRISTIAN THEISTIC WORLD VIEW.

---

[1] The Germans have two excellent descriptive terms for our English phrase, "World View": namely, *Weltanschauung* and *Weltansicht*. See James Orr, *The Christian View of God and the World*, p. 3. Of course, the word "World" in this context means the universe, not merely our mundane planet.

[2] See E. S. Brightman, *An Introduction to Philosophy*, pp. vi (preface), 162-165, et al. Says this author: "Things . . . are activities of a supreme mind; universals are the thought-stuff of a supreme mind . . ." (p. 165).

4. *The Christian Conception of God.*

Christian Theology, drawing its material from the Bible, sets forth the following doctrine of God: A personal, self-existent, all-wise, all-powerful, omnipresent, holy, and beneficent Being. This view will be maintained in this work as the only adequate ground and explication of the cosmos and all its manifestations.

5. *The Christian Conception of the Universe.*

It was created, is now sustained, and has been redeemed by its Maker as above defined.

Let us now attempt to make good our main thesis, namely, that Christianity reveals to us the true *Philosophy* as well as the final *Religion.*

CHAPTER II

CHRISTIANITY AN ADEQUATE WORLD VIEW

I. The Bible Sets Forth a Philosophy.

As has been said, the primary purpose of the Bible is to reveal to us a religion that will give us the true conception of God, save us from sin, comfort us in sorrow, and open up to our vision an immortal destiny for both men and the universe. As a religion, it is and has been unspeakably precious to millions of people, and has been verified by them in a real *experience,* the chief content of which is: the assurance of truth, pardon and salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

However, when the rational process is employed, it is found that the Bible also sets forth a philosophy, in the fundamental sense of an adequate World View, which means an adequate explanation of the cosmos and all its varied phenomena. One might put it in this way: through faith and experience men know Christianity as the true religion; through the spiritually enlightened reason they recognize it as the true philosophy.

Of course, it does not set forth its philosophy in a formal way, that is, according to the method of a textbook, or in technical and scholastic terms; but it does set forth, in a large and comprehensive way, an account of the origin and continued existence of the universe; and from this representation reason is able to derive and formulate a system of

teaching. The Bible does not set forth even a formal system of theology; yet a system of theology may be drawn from it. The same is true of ethics and psychology, because in each case the Biblical material may be assembled, orientated and classified, making an orderly system of morality or psychology. The same principle applies to the natural sciences; nature does not set forth her phenomena in the order of a scientific treatise; she simply furnishes the source-material for the organization of such a treatise.

Nor does the Bible attempt to explain all the speculative problems of general philosophy — problems that have never been solved by human genius, and that have not been revealed clearly by divine revelation. Some of these problems are the following: Ontology, or the innermost essence of things, such as matter and mind; Epistemology, or the method of knowing; Nominalism and Realism (used in the old scholastic sense), or the question of whether *universals,* like families, phyla and genera, are real entities or only names of classes. Such questions may properly be dealt with in speculative philosophy, but the Bible contains no specific revelation regarding them. We shall, however, give them some attention in subsequent sections of this work.

The Christian believer concludes that God has revealed in the Bible only those truths that are necessary for man's well-being here and hereafter, and has left many other facts and truths for man to discover for himself. Thus in some respects the Bible is "a little candle," while in other respects, and those the fundamental ones, it is "a big light." Says the Psalmist: "Thy Word is a lamp[1] unto my feet, and a light[2] unto my path" (Ps. 119:105). In some respects

[1] A little candle.

[2] A clear, shining luminary.

the Bible does not illumine our way very far, but gives us a chance to "walk by faith and not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7); in other respects it casts a radiant light upon man's whole career from the cradle to the grave, and then on into a blissful and glorious immortality (John 14:1, 2; 2 Tim. 1:10; 2 Cor. 5:1; 1 Pet. 1:4). Our thought might be put thus: The Bible solves for us the three basic problems — that of origins, that of purpose, that of destiny; or, in other words, the crucial problems of the *Whence,* the *Why,* and the *Whither.*

So, as we proceed, let us remember that the Christian philosophy, drawn from the Holy Scriptures, does not attempt to solve all the problems of human speculation; but it does solve our major problems in a way that gives to human intellects and hearts a satisfying and adequate World View. It is known as the World View of Christian Theism.

Let us now, in the next few sections, consider what philosophy, in a large and comprehensive way, seeks to accomplish.

II. Philosophy Seeks an Adequate Ground and Cause for all Phenomena.

1. *The law of Causality.*

This law, simply stated, is this: Every effect or event must have an adequate cause. That principle is an axiomatic one in human thinking. Only a few minds, lost in vague speculation, venture to challenge it, and they fail to explain any facts and phenomena in an explicit and adequate way. Philosophy, if it is to be worth while, must keep its feet on the ground of reality.

All science, as well as all philosophy, accepts as one of its basic principles this law of cause and effect. If the sci-

entist sees an effect, or a result, or an event, he intuitively ascribes to it an adequate cause, and forthwith begins to seek for that cause. The discovery of the planet Neptune is a conspicuous example of the application of the law of causality to mathematical astronomy.

Now, if we are going to be directed by this fundamental law, which we cannot avoid recognizing, we must seek for an adequate cause of the cosmos and its varied phenomena. Where in all our searching shall we find this efficient cause? We discover it only in what is known as:

2. *The Theistic World View.*

We shall find, as we proceed, that we must prefix the word *Christian* to our caption if we would tell the whole story, designating it, *The Christian Theistic World View;* for, as we shall see, mere Natural Theism does not effectively explicate many outstanding phenomena in the cosmos; for example, the phenomenon of the experience of redemption through Christ. But this part of our system shall receive attention in due time.

And what, in the Christian sense, is the Theistic World View? It is that conception which postulates the existence of a personal God, such as the Bible sets forth, and recognizes His personal relation to the universe, including the race of mankind.[3] Let us put our argument in logical order.

(1) *Origin of Matter, Force, and Motion.*

If we assume and recognize a personal, self-conscious omniscient, omnipotent, and eternal God — the God portrayed in the Bible — as above and in the universe, we are assigning an adequate cause for the origin and continued existence of the *material* part of the cosmos. Should objection be

[3] For the outstanding attributes of God according to the Christian conception, see Chap. I, IV, sec. 4, of this work.

made that we are here assuming the major premise, we reply that the laws of thought and reason require us to assume something that is eternal, and therefore, if we are going to be thoroughgoing in our thinking processes, we must assume a Something or a Some One that is an adequate cause for the grand and total effect.

Moreover, we are not merely assuming out of hand, in the *a priori* fashion, a personal God as the First Cause. For, having previously studied the cosmos, having regarded it as a whole and in many of its minutiae, we are practically driven to the conclusion that it must be the product of Intelligence; and, as far as we know anything, we know that intelligence can be predicated only of personal beings. Therefore, our assumption of a personal God is based upon a previous *a posteriori* investigation of many data; and that is, admittedly, the scientific mode of procedure since Bacon's time. It is the method of *induction.*

Now, having found good inductive reason for believing in a personal, all-wise, all-powerful, and eternal God, we can try out this hypothesis *deductively,* to see whether it will explain the physical cosmos as we know it. One of the best arguments for the use of the deductive (as well as the inductive) method of reasoning is found in a recent book, in which the author says:

> From the universal, particular inferences may be drawn. . . . Causality and being are just as much primary in their significance as are space and time. That an effect must have a cause is just as axiomatic as that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points. . . . If there are metaphysical axioms, what law of science or philosophy prevents the use of them in proving the existence of God? There is no law against the use of any truth for legitimate purposes.[4]

---

[4] A. E. Maness, *Evidences of the Divine Being,* pp. 15, 16.

Let us proceed, then, with our argument from causality on the assumption of the Theistic World View in the Christian sense.

First, this World View will adequately account for the *origin of matter.* Such a God as the Bible depicts *could* have brought the *primordial material* into existence *ex nihilo;* that is, he *could* have created something which had no prior existence; because He is all-wise and all-powerful. To say that matter is eternal and uncreated is to endue matter with the attributes of infinity, self-existence, absoluteness, and intelligence, which are distinctions that we know matter does not possess. At least, it does not possess intelligence, and hence could not bring forth intelligent personal beings such as we men are.

On the other hand, mind is possessed of intelligence, self-consciousness, and personality. Place God back of and in the universe, and you have the origin and continued existence of matter adequately accounted for. Materialism as a philosophy cannot even account for the origin of the very entity with which it professes solely to deal, to say nothing of accounting for the origin of self-conscious personalities. The Theistic Philosophy is also equal to the task of explaining the *origin of force or energy.* This is obvious because the God of Christian Theism is all-powerful. We even deduce our primary idea of force from our own experience in exerting it by efforts of volition, and by its impact upon ourselves when it touches or moves us. Thus all sorts of physical energy — latent, potential, kinetic, electric, magnetic — can be adequately accounted for on the theistic basis, and in no other way that can be made intelligible to the human mind.

By the same tokens, the Theistic Philosophy is competent to account for the *origin of motion.* A little thought will

clarify this proposition. Apparently all physical entities, from the largest star to the infinitesimal and super-microscopic electron, are in motion. Yet matter in itself is inert. Now, if the primordial material was in a state of perfect equilibrium, it never could have disturbed that status by its own initiation, and thus produced motion. What is the only entity of which we have any knowledge that can originate motion? It is personal *mind,* which is constitutionally endued with such initiating power through the will. Try to lift your arm, now hanging loosely by your side, to a horizontal position, and see if you cannot do it. Mere unconscious matter could never perform such an act. Of itself it can start nothing going.

But, as has been shown, mind can initiate motion. Therefore the Divine Mind could have touched the pristine quiescent or equilibrial matter, and thus have started it in revolving and other movements from star to electron.

(2) *Law, Order, and Design.*

The Christian Philosophy also accounts with supreme adequacy for the *order, law, and design* which are evident in the universe.

The universe is a cosmos; certainly not a chaos. It is under a regime of law. All students of nature hold to that view. But if the universe is a mere happen-so, it is impossible to understand how it could be, or ever could have become, an economy of law and order. Could chaos have emerged into cosmos by means of resident forces? No! because the requisite resident forces were not there; and it is wrong to smuggle them in cryptically through some secret back alley.

However, an ordering Supreme Mind, which is the Christian conception of God, could have created a world of law,

order, and purpose, and it is extremely unreasonable to believe that He would have done otherwise. Here again the only adequate and rational philosophy is that of Christian Theism.

(3) *Origin of Life.*

Equal to the demand made upon our philosophy is also the crucial problem of the *origin of life.*

The *elan vital* of Bergson must in some way be accounted for — unless men are content to dwell in the fogland of agnosticism. Spontaneous generation has never been proved, and one can hardly conceive of its being possible; for it would be equal to "getting something out of nothing." And we must insist on the principle, *Ex nihilo nihil fit.*

Indeed, the law of biogenesis now seems to hold the field among biologists. A well-known specialist in biology and cytology recently declared that the gap between living and non-living matter seems to be wider now than ever.[5]

Suppose we turn to the Christian conception. The God of the Bible is often called "the living God." Now, since He is not only the living Supreme Being, but is also all-wise and all-powerful, He could very easily have created the original vital germ or germs, the first germ-plasm or germ-plasms; and it seems to be reasonable to believe that He would do so just as soon as the earth was developed into a condition fitted to sustain living organisms.

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[5] See L. L. Woodruff in *The Evolution of the Earth and Its Inhabitants,* p. 94. Professor Woodruff quotes Dr. E. B. Wilson, whom he calls "the dean of American biologists," who says in his great work, *The Cell in its Development and Inheritance,* that "the study of the cell has on the whole seemed to widen rather than to narrow the enormous gap that separates even the lowest forms of life from the inorganic world." See also Vernon Kellog, Evolution, pp. 110, 111; J. Arthur Thomson, *Science and Religion,* p. 127.

Moreover, the God who could create all the electrons, atoms, and molecules of the inorganic universe surely could just as easily have brought into existence each specific germplasm, and endued it with the genetic power to reproduce "after its kind," just as the Bible describes (Gen. 1:11, 12, 21, 24, 25), and as we perceive to be the order of organic nature today when we study her just as she is, without looking through the colored glasses of subjective prepossessions and speculative philosophy. At all events, no one can successfully deny that the Christian view ascribes an adequate cause for the origin and continuance of all the various living forms upon this planet.

(4) *Origin of Personality.*

But there are higher orders of existence than mere material substance and vegetable and animal life. Coming up into the realm of human personality, we are introduced to new conceptions and categories, and are compelled to express realities in different terms. We must be introduced to these, for an adequate philosophy must be all-sided; it must give a commensurate account of the highest as well as the lowest qualitative factors of the actual world. So we hold that the Christian Philosophy explicates adequately the origin of *human sentiency, self-consciousness, personality, reason, morality, spirituality.*

The God of Christianity is depicted in the Bible as a God of feeling (Gen. 6:6; Isa. 63:10; John 3:16; Eph. 4:30; Phil. 2:13); and, being all-wise and all-powerful, He certainly would be able to create sentient beings. He is also a self-conscious God, and that is the only kind of Power that could have created self-conscious beings. The Bible everywhere describes Him as a personal God, and therefore He was able to create human personalities, who are able, like Himself,

to say "I," and know what is meant by conscious selfhood. Could the personal have evolved from the non-personal by means of resident forces? Remember our axiom: Every effect must have an adequate cause.

Pursuing the same line of argument, the God of Christianity is portrayed as righteous, ethical, and spiritual. Said Jesus: "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth"; therefore, He must have been capable of bringing into existence finite personalities with the same ethical and spiritual characteristics as His own, only in a finite degree.

(5) *Summation of the Argument.*

To sum up our argumentation: The Christian World View, with its doctrine of Theism, upholds the foundational principle of causality, and thus furnishes an adequate and rational explanation of all the phenomena of the cosmos from those of the lowest to those of the highest qualitative value. Yes, it is able to give a good account of itself. From the viewpoint of adequacy it is entitled to be called a philosophy, and, as far as we have gone, it seems to be the only philosophy that proves itself to be sufficient.

CHAPTER III

THE UNIFYING PRINCIPLE AND POWER

I. The Doctrine of the Eternal God.

Before proceeding further, it becomes necessary to attend to a question that is crucial at this point in our discussion. It is the old, old question, *"Who made God?"*[1]. At some time in their lives this question troubles most thinking people. Professor John Tyndall, we have read somewhere, declared that there were times when he could not sleep at night for mulling over the question, "Who made God?" We have heard quite young children ask the same question. It is often raised by students and colleges and seminaries, as well as by people of more advanced years. In a recent brochure entitled, *Why I Am Not a Christian,* Mr. Bertrand Russell springs the same hoary — not to say bald-headed — question, and quotes from John Stuart Mill's *Autobiography* as follows: "My father taught that the question, Who made me? cannot be answered, since it immediately suggests the other question, Who made God?" On reading that, Mr. Russell succumbed, and at once gave up his faith in God, apparently without a struggle. But we shall see that Mr. Russell gave up his belief entirely too easily.

However, since it is regarded by many people as a serious question, it must not be evaded, ignored, or treated with scorn. What is the best way of dealing with the problem?

[1] See the author's *The Problem of Origins,* pp. 27-29.

1. *The Question Involves a Contradiction.*

For, if you think of a being as God, and then think of His having been created by some other being, He — the first being — would not *be* God. The same contradiction would persist, no matter how often you should ask the question, Who made God?

2. *An Unending Regressive Series Unthinkable.*

The conception of an infinite series, going back and back and never ending, has been thought of since time immemorial, but has never been tolerable to the human mind. It would seem to be an unending chain hanging on nothing. In such a conception the mind can find no resting place.

3. *There Must be an Ultimate Reality.*

Perhaps the best way to deal with the problem is to realize clearly that there must be an eternally existent Reality. Since there is something existent now, there must have always been something existent; for, if there ever was a time when there was nothing, nothing could have ever come into existence. "From nothing, nothing comes." Here we are face to face with the familiar but profound problem of Ontology in the realm of philosophy.[2]

4. *The Ultimate Reality a Person.*

Now, since there must have been an eternally existent and ultimate Reality, of what order of being must that Reality be? Is it not much better and much more rational to believe that the eternal Something was an eternal Some *One?* Is not that a far more reasonable conception than the idea that the eternal Reality was merely an *It,* or a mere insensate material substance?

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[2] The problem of Ontology will be dealt with in a subsequent chapter.

Moreover, reason teaches clearly that the ultimate and eternal Reality must be a Person, for there are personalities on our planet, millions of them; and they must be adequately accounted for, or our philosophy halts and limps, and is proven to be fatally defective. Christian Theism alone points us to the adequate conception by telling us that the Ultimate Reality is the Ultimate Personality, who created all finite realities, including such personal beings as you and me. Dr. A. E. Maness, quoted above, puts this proposition in a forceful way:

> The rational mind knows that "something cannot spring from nothing." Such a truth as that needs no proof. It is self-evident. What kind of demonstration could make it clearer than it is? All the imaginable zeros of infinity could never make one. Nothing is the only thing that can come from nothing; and since nothing is not a thing, no kind of a thing can come from nothing. . . . So the conclusion of our syllogism is correct. Something always was; something always has been. . . . The popular mind says: "The Something that always was is God." [3]

The same author treats, in an effective way, another axiomatic truth whose discussion is both relevant and crucial at this place:

> A like cause must produce a like effect. The source must be commensurate with the consequences. To have a cause producing an effect contrary to its nature, or producing an effect greater than its cause, would be equal to getting something from nothing. . . . [Therefore] Rational being cannot spring out of irrational matter. . . . Neither can rational being spring from nothing. But rational being is; therefore, rational being always was [has been]. This rational being that must have always been can be none other than the very and eternal God.[4]

All this reasoning proves, as nearly as fundamental reasoning can prove anything, that Christian Theism offers to human thought the only adequate and rational philosophy.

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[3] E. A. Maness, *op. cit.*, pp. 16, 17.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

5. *The Universe a Developing System.*

While we cannot accept the doctrine of evolution, yet there is much scientific evidence that the cosmos was not always what it is now; that there has been a progressive change. But if the universe were eternal, that could not be. If it were eternal, it would be absolute, self-existent, infinite, and hence could not develop. Or if it has been unfolding from eternity, it should long ago have reached its present status. Indeed, it is absurd to think of something that has always existed as developing. Therefore, the universe must have been created in time; but that implies a Creator, and no kind of a Creator, as we have seen, is adequate save the God depicted by Christianity.

We are now prepared to consider the next vital requirement of an adequate philosophical explanation.

II. An Adequate Unifying Principle and Power.

1. *The Diversity in the Universe.*

There is practically endless diversity in the universe. This fact is patent everywhere. It is said that no two leaves of the forest, no two blades of grass, no two peas in a pod, are precisely alike. It is probable that no two molecules, atoms, or protons are precisely similar. If they were, it is difficult to see how they could produce such limitless variety in the material world. It is hardly conceivable that two life cells are exactly similar, for each one is formed under somewhat different conditions.

The same wonderful diversity obtains in the animal world. The author once took three very young wood thrushes from their nest, carried them home, and reared them by hand. At once he could distinguish each one from its mates, and, as they grew, they revealed, not only a marked difference in appearance, but also a marked difference in disposition.

One of them was restless and wild, and chafed at his imprisonment; the other two were more docile and contented, though in different degrees.

The regimen of diversity also characterizes the human domain. No two persons are alike; each has idiosyncrasies that mark him off from all other individuals. What a mingling of temperaments in most persons, making exact scientific classification impossible! Some people, for example, seem to combine in their nature the elements of the sanguine and the phlegmatic temperaments. No two human faces are precisely alike. You can often even distinguish your acquaintances by merely noting the backs of their heads and necks and the pose of their shoulders.

And there is a divine reasonableness in all this diversity. We human beings could not live, neither could our animal friends live, in a regime of monotonous sameness. For one thing, the humdrumness of such a world would be so oppressive as to drive us to distraction. "Variety is the spice of life." Not only so, but diversity is absolutely essential to existence in the animal and human world. To illustrate in a very simple way: if the mother sheep could not distinguish her own lamb, what would occur? If the farmer could not tell one horse from another, he would not know which animal to hitch to the plow and which to the carriage. Human social life is largely dependent on the simple, elementary fact that we can distinguish one person from another by their different physiognomies.

Thus an economy of diversity is the only rational and possible one, and hence connotes a divine order. And yet, with all its marvelous differentiations, the world is a unified system. This leads us to the next division of our thesis.

2. *The Cosmos a Universe.*

The universe coheres; it holds together; it is a unified system; all its parts are so related and connected as to form an integer and to work together for an evident concurring purpose. Rightly and intuitively we call it a Universe (*unus,* one, *verto,* to turn). If it were not so constituted, it would be a chaos, a welter of things, and there could be no organic and rational existences. This truth is self-evident, so that it needs no further elaboration.

Now one of the fundamental problems of philosophy is to find the unifying principle and power in a universe of such practically limitless diversity. Where shall we seek for it?

3. *Wrong Trails for the Unifying Principle.*

(1) It cannot be found in *matter,* for no chemist or physicist has ever succeeded in finding the ultimate particle from which all other particles are derived or of which they are composed; and even if such particle could be found, it would not be able to hold this vast universe together in a coherent and orderly system.[5] To hold such a view, the speculative philosopher would have to assume the ultimate particle to be practically omnipotent and omniscient. Thus the materialistic and mechanistic philosophy is proved to be inadequate and without foundation.

(2) It may almost go without saying that *Pantheism* cannot determine the adequate coherent principle in the universe; for to merge mind and matter into one ultimate

[5] In the latest work on physical science that has come to our notice, we read that the number of primary elements has now been raised to ninety-two. Some years ago only seventy-five were known. Thus more diversity is found by increased physical research, but no unifying particle or power.

substance, with the two attributes of thought and extension, as Spinoza did, is to leave the realm of observation and empiricism, and lose oneself in the mists of speculation. No one has ever found such an ultimate substance, and when one tries to imagine or visualize it, nothing but a blur appears before the mind. A true philosophy must keep its feet on the solid ground of factuality.[6]

(3) The philosophy of *Idealism* is that mind is the only entity; that matter has no real existence; that it (matter) is simply a subjective form of thought.

The author believes that many valid arguments can be brought against this speculative system;[7] but here we are seeking for only the ultimate cohering principle and power. What is known as Panpsychism (that the universe is all mind) is certainly only a matter of human speculation; but even so, when you try to posit a unifying and co-ordinating principle, thought vanishes off into haziness. No words can define or describe it.

If, on the other hand, human minds are the only entities, the result would be a mere welter of diversity, for no two human minds are exactly alike, and no consensus ever could be attained; for, as the familiar adage runs, there "are many men of many minds." It would be absurd, we think, to believe that millions of finite minds could of themselves ever reach such an agreement as to form a universe or even to dwell together in a social organism.

It is needless to canvass other speculative systems, for we

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[6] This brief treatment of Pantheism is not meant to dismiss it lightly with a mere toss of the hand; its inadequacy in other respects will be shown in subsequent chapters.

[7] See his *A System of Natural Theism*, second edition, pp. 98-105. Also cf. A. S. Pringle-Pattison, *The Idea of God in the Light of Recent Philosophy*, pp. 172-204.

cannot find our way to reality in modes of thinking that are suspended, as it were, in the air. Let us come to grips with factualities. When we move, therefore, into the realm of reality and empiricism (experience and observation), where do we find the only real unifier in diversity? Of course, in a search of this kind we must go to facts in the cosmos as we know them; and then draw the legitimate inferences.

4. *The Only Adequate Unifier.*

Our proposition now is that the only real unifying principle of which we have any actual knowledge is Personality. We might define it further by the terms, Egoity, Selfhood, Ihood, Self-consciousness, all of which connote what we might call the *core* of personality. A person is a being who can say "I," and knows what it means — that is, knows that it refers to himself as a self-conscious being. That men have such self-consciousness, or Ihood, ought to require no argument. It is a matter of universal experience. Every sane person is conscious of himself, and distinguishes himself from all other persons and objects.

A little girl of four who often comes into the author's home says "I," "I," "I," hundreds of times a day; and she never confuses "you," or "he," or "she," with "I." Self-consciousness is evidently an elemental intuition of the human mind. The fact is, most people are *too* self-conscious.

If we were not self-conscious, we could not even use the term "self-consciousness," for we cannot express any conception that we do not have in mind. All words — at least, those that are basic in language — are symbols of thoughts that stand out in human awareness.

By canvassing our experience, let us see what a unifying principle personality (egoity) is in human life. A man's body undergoes many changes as the years go by, so that

it may not contain a single particle of substance today that it contained several years ago. Many changes also take place in a man's mental life. He now has different convictions, different emotions, different feelings, from those he once had, especially when he was a child and a youth. Even his volitions in some ways have undergone mutation.

And yet he is and remains the *same person,* the same *ego,* through all the years and all his varied experiences. Whatever else has changed, that has perdured; and that has held together all the diversity of his experiences in a unified life and a continuous identity. After the passage of many years, he will positively aver that he is the *very person* who was born at such a place, who lived in such and such a house, who went to a certain school in a certain district when he was a boy. "Yes," he says, "I am the same person." The fact is, the *continuum* of his personality through the years is his most dominant psychical experience — at least, no other experience stands out more clearly in his mental life.

Now, if we find personality, in the sense of egoity or Ihood, the only co-ordinating and synthesizing fact and factor in human life and experience, it is likely that we shall succeed in our quest for the unifying principle and power in the universe by pursuing the same process of reasoning — that is, we shall find it in a *Divine Person,* who presides over and dwells in the universe. In the physical cosmos and in the realm of finite minds, as we have seen, we can find no solidarity at all, to say nothing of finding an adequate one; but as soon as we conceive of God, personal, all-wise, and all-powerful, as having created the universe and as sustaining it, and as being "the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8, applied to Christ as divine), we have found the power that made the universe to be a universe and that *keeps* it a universe. Just as the human ego

is the *continuum* in human life, giving it unity and coherence, and exercising more or less control over all other human processes, so the Divine Ego perdures from age to age the same, holds in leash and correlated order all the varied elements, substances, forces, and processes of the universe, and reigns supremely over all. His rule is complete by virtue of the fact that He is the absolute and Infinite One, the all-powerful First Cause. We confess that we cannot understand where else thinkers can discover, or even conceive of, an adequate potentiality to hold this universe, with all its marvelous diversity, together in a unified system.

If men care at all for reasoning processes — that is, if they care for philosophy — they ought, we think, to accept the only conclusion that furnishes an adequate and rational basis.

CHAPTER IV

THE CRITERION OF TRUTH

I. A Problem of Philosophy.

From time immemorial the question, "What is the standard of truth?" has presented a problem to the philosophical mind. Perhaps most people have an intuitive conception of how we know truth, but when they are asked to state their notion in words, or give a concise definition, they halt and stumble, and their thought becomes a blur. The same is true when we try to define anything in an ultimate way. We seem to know what truth, virtue, and righteousness are — until we try to define them. "I knew what it was — before you asked me," has become something of an adage.

Nevertheless, the rational mind persists in asking questions; neither is it an idle business to proceed as far as thought and reason can go in the search for reality. Surely reason, as well as faith, is a divinely constituted faculty of the human mind. Thus we must essay to answer the question, What is the criterion of truth?

II. Various Proposed Solutions.

Dr. E. S. Brightman, in his recent treatise,[1] catalogues and discusses the several criteria of truth that have, from time to time, been proposed by philosophical thinkers. Let us examine them in the order given by this writer.

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[1] E. S. Brightman, *An Introduction to Philosophy*, pp. 35-66. See also James H. Ryan, *An Introduction to Philosophy*, pp. 203-241, for an excellent discussion of this subject.

1. *Instinct.*

There can be no doubt that instinct is a guide for animals, and perhaps the only guide they have, although there are many cases in which they seem to exercise a degree of intelligence that goes beyond mere instinctive action. Human children also possess instinct, and are impelled and directed by it before they reach the years of responsible intelligence. And all through life men seem to do some things instinctively, much after the manner of the animals.

But surely mere animal instinct cannot furnish a standard of truth in the higher realms of reason, judgment, morality and religion; for too much conscious thought and volition are involved in these exalted spheres. Mere instinct could not enable men to recognize truth as truth, or to desire it for its own sake. In other words, the explanation is not adequate, and the mind necessarily places a large plus sign after it.

2. *Custom.*

Little need be said on this point, for custom, while it may often afford help in finding some truth, is often wrong and artificial, and must itself be brought before the bar of reason and judgment for a verdict upon its status as truth or untruth.

3. *Tradition.*

Of course, only the novice and upstart will scoff at tradition; for a view or a conviction that has come down through the ages and has entered into the experiences of many people, especially upright and intelligent people, has some tokens, *ipso facto,* in its favor, and should be carefully and judicially considered. A hoary conviction should not be lightly cast into the discard. It could hardly have endured so long without having at least some element of truth

in it. This is especially the case when a general conviction has proven salutary.

Yet a thing cannot be said to be true merely because it is encased in tradition, for many traditions have had to be revised and many others entirely rejected. If a thing is true, it is true, whether it is old or new, and *vice versa.*

4. *Consensus Gentium.*

True, the general agreement of the whole human race would speak loudly in favor of the verity of any proposition or conviction; but the problem is, How are you going to obtain the *consensus* of all the millions of mankind? So here is a proposal that is purely speculative and is impossible of application.

5. *Feeling.*

Sometimes we say, "I feel that such and such a proposition is true," even though no valid reason can be given for the conviction. No doubt feeling often helps men to the attainment of truth. It has something of the nature of intuition about it.

Yet it must be said that feeling is too unreliable and fluctuating to be a safe guide as a touchstone of truth. A feeling, too, must always be weighed in the balance by reason and conscience. It cannot pronounce a verdict upon itself.

6. *Intuition.*

Here our thought is lifted into a higher realm and category. We know many truths by an immediate act or cognition of the mind, without putting them through a rational process. We simply know them because we *know* them. If we are asked how we know them, we simply answer, "Because"; and in this case "because" is a real reason, and the only one that can be given. These truths are of a higher

order than are mere instincts, which have to do only with the preservation of our physical or natural life. Intuitions connote a considerable degree of intelligence. They give us the immediate cognition of the reality of the material world, of time and space, of our selfhood, of mathematical axioms, of the primary fact of right and wrong, of many maxims, and of a Something or a Some One higher than the natural world and our dependent and limited selves.

Thus we must admit that we know many truths by intuition — truths, too, of a palmary and fundamental character; many of them of a high qualitative value and importance.

Yet, withal, we do not seem to have probed to the heart of our problem. And why? Because as we advance in knowledge and experience, we become conscious of many truths which we do not know by mere mental acts of immediacy, but which come to us by other psychical routes and methods. For example, in the study of geometry we begin with a few axioms which we cognize as true as soon as they are stated; but our intuitions alone will not demonstrate the theorems that follow; nor will they carry us through our trigonometry and calculus. Intuition is a good criterion as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough.

7. *Sense Experience.*

The consideration of this theme at this place seems to be a *descensus;* but for convenience we are following Professor Brightman's order.[2] Of course, sense experience gives us knowledge of many truths; or, to put it more accurately and psychologically, the human mind cognizes many truths (facts) through the media of the senses. The nervous sys-

[2] *Ibid.,* p. 35. It is only right to say here that Dr. Brightman must not be held even remotely responsible for our language, our position, or our method of presentation, which are solely our own.

tem receives and conveys the impressions of the phenomenal world to the center of our consciousness, and then the mind reacts to them and becomes aware of them as objective realities. For such external facts the mind is dependent upon the sensory system, including the brain, the spinal cord, the ganglia, the afferent and efferent nerves, the synapses, etc.; and thus, for this order of truths, sense experience becomes a norm of truth — at least, a *norma normata,* though perhaps not a *norma normans.*

But the human soul is aware of many truths that are far above mere physical sensation. The old so-called "Sensational Philosophy" has, we believe, been non-suited in the court of reason and experience. The senses explain some things, but they cannot explain everything. After they have done their best and their most, a large plus sign confronts us; and the truths and values that follow that symbol are those of the highest qualitative significance.

8. *Correspondence.*

A mere abstract term like "correspondence" as a norm naturally leads to an abstruse and speculative method of philosophizing. If certain propositions agree, that fact might, indeed, lend probability to their standing as verities, and the more the agreements the greater the degree of probability. But surely no man could investigate so widely as to check up all the data of the universe, and make a synthesis of them; and hence he might be said to be "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim. 3:7). Therefore, correspondence cannot be made the final alembic in which truth can be tested.

9. *Pragmatism.*

Some years ago, through the influence of William James,[3]

[3] See his *Pragmatism.*

and some of the German writers who made a *penchant* of "value judgments,"[4] this system of speculation had a considerable vogue. But it seems to be little stressed today.

For these advocates the only standard was *usefulness.* Is a thing beneficial? Does it work well? If it does, then no matter whether it is true or not, let us adopt it and use it as if it were true. If Christ has the "value of God" to us, said Ritschl, let us trust Him, even if such a person never lived.

These were some of the principles of Pragmatism, which is, as is easily seen, simply another term for Utilitarianism.[5] The truth in it is this, that a force, movement, or principle which has proved salutary in the world's history is more likely to be true than false. In this respect much may be said in favor of Christianity, through whose influence many evil lives have been transformed, and vast benefits have accrued to races and nations. If this were not true, we would be forced to conclude that error is more useful and salutary than truth. It is difficult, however, to believe that our world is so irrational a world as that.

And yet mere beneficialness cannot be made the final touchstone of truth, but only one of the elements in life that help us to come to a knowledge of the truth. Truth must have an inherent right in itself. A thing "must be true, though the heavens fall." To make usefulness the criterion of truth is one of the proverbial instances of "putting the cart before the horse" — an order that makes locomotion impossible, or, at least, very awkward and difficult. The right order is, a principle, proposition, or power is beneficial because it is true, and not the reverse.

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[4] Especially Albrecht Ritschl.

[5] The latter term, however, is usually employed in works on the science of Ethics.

Moreover, if a man begins to suspect an institution to be false, even though it may seem to be helpful to him, it will soon lose its influence over his life. The human mind always reverts to the fundamental question, "Is it true?" Pragmatism, therefore, is too superficial to constitute an adequate philosophy and to give the world an adequate standard of truth.[6]

Biblical teaching plows deeper than the Pragmatists: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). It frequently occurs in this life that men must follow the truth even when, at least in many ways, it seems to be harmful to them instead of beneficial. At this point the real test of character often comes to the fore. A noted unbeliever once said, "It is better to lie than to die." The Christian martyrs did not think so.

10. *Coherence.*

Another test of truth held by some philosophers is known as the doctrine of Coherence. Dr. Brightman strongly inclines to this view, and sets forth an argument for it with which one cannot help being impressed.[7]

Still, we cannot help thinking that it would require a long time for a man, however acute, to examine the whole cosmos in such a way as to discover the coherence of all its multifarious data. Who would be equal to such a task? Not the common man, surely; and yet the common man ought to know the fundamental truth, and usually does know it.

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[6] For discussions on Pragmatism, see the following authors: E. S. Brightman, *An Introduction to Philosophy,* pp. 50-58; H. C. Sheldon, *Pantheistic Dilemmas and Other Essays,* chap. II; J. H. Ryan, *An Introduction to Philosophy,* pp. 166-177; G. T. W. Patrick, *An Introduction to Philosophy,* pp. 374-397. For a concise treatment see the Author, *A System of Natural Theism,* pp. 127-129.

[7] Brightman, *ibid.,* pp. 58-66.

Yet it is very doubtful whether he ever thinks of figuring out whether the truth he cognizes is based upon the doctrine of its coherence with all other data in the universe. Surely for the world of mankind in general, there must be a more direct and practical way of knowing truth.

Yet in fairness it should be added that, as far as the coherence of things can be seen, it furnishes cogent evidence in favor of the belief that the universe is a true universe; for, as far as we can figure out, universal error would bring universal chaos. Only, we should not say that coherence is the final criterion of truth.

We have now canvassed what we regard as the more or less defective explanations of the criteria of truth. Can we find somewhere the ultimate principle or test whereby we cognize truth as truth and take our stand upon it as verity? Is it possible to form a synthesis of all claims to validity? We believe that such a standard can be found.

III. The Synthetic View.

1. *The Need of Going Deeper.*

Thus far in our examination of the various proposed criteria of truth, there has always seemed to be something deeper, something more foundational; in other words, to put it colloquially, we do not seem to have "struck rock bottom." [8] Shall we be able to dig deep enough? Perhaps not in our own wisdom.

2. *Christianity's Source Book.*

Since this is a work on Christian Philosophy, we are impelled at this point to consult Christianity's great Source Book. It may be that we shall find its wisdom more pro-

[8] Sometimes a common colloquialism gets us nearer the truth than all our fine-spun philosophical phrasing.

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found and illuminating than all our human wisdom. One of its foremost writers make this observation: "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." In the teaching of Christ we find this statement: "If ye abide in my Word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

To our mind, there is something very arresting, significant and fundamental in this Biblical statement; something altogether relevant to our present theme. To what does Christ here make His appeal? To the self-evidencing power of truth impressed upon the center of men's consciousness. "Ye shall *know* the truth." That is probing back into the very depth of human psychology and experience. What, after all is said and done, is the only way by which we know anything? Simply and solely by its coming into the field of our consciousness.

For all we know, there may be, and very probably are, thousands of facts in God's universe of which we have no knowledge; but of one fact we are sure, if we are sure of anything, namely, that the only things we do cognize as truths are those that have, in some way or some ways, made an appeal to, or an impact upon, our innate capacity of awareness. A truth going back as a stimulus to the center of the self-conscious mind effects a corresponding reaction.

Hence Jesus probed to the root of the matter when He said, "Ye shall *know* the truth"; which, being interpreted in psychical language, means: "You have within you the capacity of cognizing the truth when it is impressed upon your self-conscious Ego. Not only so, but the truth which I teach you in my Word carries its own credentials as truth with it, and creates a corresponding recognition and response in your souls. In other words, the stimulus of my truth penetrates to your consciousness, and your consciousness,

being an innate capacity of your selfhood, reacts to the stimulus; just as, when you see an object or hear a sound, the stimulus from without effects the corresponding reaction within the self-conscious mind."

Here we have built upon experience and empiricism, not upon speculation. Here we have the only criterion by which we know any truth; by which, in fact, we know all the truth that we do know. Still more, we have no other means of knowing the truth.[9] We have here also, it might be added, given a broad hint as to the solution of the problem of Epistemology, or how we know, which is an outstanding problem in speculative philosophy, and which will be dealt with more fully in a subsequent chapter of this volume.

Another fundamental statement of Jesus is the following: "My teaching is not mine, but His that sent me. If anyone willeth to do His will, he shall know concerning the teaching, whether it is from God, or I speak from myself."

Here again Jesus appeals to a fundamental psychical law, the law through which, under proper conditions, one may become aware of the truth. By doing the Father's will — that is, by prayer, repentance, and faith in Christ as prior conditions — the proper appeal is made to the conscious mind, which responds to it in a cognitive way. Hence, according to Christ (and according to psychology as well), truth is known only in one way, namely, by an experience of it in the conscious soul.

The same criterion of truth is clearly set forth or implied in another crucial statement of Holy Scripture: "Thomas saith unto Him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way,

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[9] An objection that might arise here will receive attention a little later.

and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but through me. If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also" (John 14:5-7). This means that, under the right conditions, psychical, ethical and spiritual, the self-evidencing impress of truth, as it is embodied in Christ, will be made upon the consciousness of the soul, and the soul will intuitively react to it. How else can human beings know truth?

Again Jesus said: "But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, because they have been wrought in God" (John 3:21). Knowledge of the truth gives men confidence and makes them fearless and frank.

When the Samaritans heard Jesus' teaching, many believed on Him: "And they said to the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy speaking: for we have heard for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world" (John 4:42). Here the impingement of truth was made upon the consciousness of those Samaritans through their hearing the word of Christ. Many more of the "knows," or their synonyms, of the Holy Scriptures might be cited (Rom. 8:16; Acts 5:32; 2 Cor. 5:1; 2 Tim. 1:12; 1 John 3:14, 19, 24; 4:6, 13; 5:10, 20); but more are not needed here.

3. *How We Cognize Truth.*

So the criterion of truth for every man is his cognition of it in his own soul, which is so constituted by its Maker as to receive the truth. No man can know the truth in any other way. If his mind did not have this innate, or, better, this created capacity, he would never be able to cognize truth as truth. There may be much truth that he knows nothing about; he may also believe many errors; but what-

ever truth he is assured of has made its impress as reality and verity upon the central receiving station of his soul, namely, his self-conscious Ego.

Suppose, now, we review the ground already traversed. Some truths may come to the center of consciousness through the instincts; certainly many come by intuition, custom, tradition, the *consensus gentium*, and feeling, all of which bear fruitage in bringing truth to the soul; surely sense experience contributes much knowledge that can be attained in no other way; correspondence, pragmatism, coherence — *reason* should also be added — all help us to cognize reality; and yet in every case the data must be brought before the final court of adjudication, the Self-conscious Ego, before they can be known as verities.

The skeptic will probably reply that human consciousness often errs; therefore, it is an uncertain criterion of truth. This is the objection to which we referred in a footnote on a previous page. It is, of course, a fact that men make many mistakes. They are finite, and all are sinful, and no human judgment is infallible. But we are not looking for an infallible norm in this human world; we are trying to discover the only norm we have for knowing truth; and we know by experience that that norm is the soul's cognition of truth when it is presented to its conscious Selfhood. As long as a man does not cognize truth in his inner self, he must walk in uncertainty. Man's only organ for reality is his conscious mind. The truth and the conscious mind have been made to fit each other.

We have anticipated another objection, this time from the behavioristic and materialistic monist in psychology. He wonders what is meant by those "metaphysical" terms, the Mind, Self-consciousness, Ihood, and the Conscious Ego. He says he cannot visualize them; he cannot form a clear

mental picture or conception of them. Therefore, he relegates them to the realm of fancy, or phantasy, or illusion.[10]

The reply is: We cannot form mental pictures of many realities — for example, the ether of space, the electron, electricity, a thought, truth, virtue, wisdom, hope, mind. Yet if there is anything of which we have a clear and immediate experience, it is our self-conscious Ego. Let even the behaviorist reflect for a moment how often he says, "I"; how often he thinks, "I"; whether, in fact, his "I" is not his last thought at night and his first thought in the morning; and even in his dreams his inevitable "I" occupies the center of the stage. He cannot even decide to write a book on Behaviorism without saying to himself: *"I* am going to write a book to convince the world that there is no such a reality as *I"*! Self-consciousness is a matter of universal and continual experience. You know that you are the same person you were yesterday only because you possess a perduring self-conscious Ego.

Does the Christian believer say, "Is not the Bible the criterion of truth in spiritual matters, and, indeed, in all matters with which it deals?" Our reply is, it is the *objective* norm of truth; but here we are dealing with the criterion by which we *subjectively know* the truth; and that must be the inner consciousness or experience of it by the Holy Spirit's witness through the Word of God. Until such an impact is made upon the soul, no man can *know* that the Holy Scriptures are God's true revelation to mankind. Thus Biblical truth must make its appeal to the same center of consciousness as does all other truth; and our consciousness is endued with a capacity for cognizing spir-

[10] The Hindus have the striking word *Maya,* which means illusion, and they think that the whole cosmos is only a chimera, including the world of material things.

itual truth, just as it is capacitated to receive and cognize sense impressions as realities. This fact is clear to all persons who have had a Christian experience.

In the interest of true Christianity, an important qualification needs to be made here. In religious matters this spiritual capacity of the soul has been, as it were, paralyzed; for, as the Scriptures teach, we are "dead in sins and trespasses," and must be "born again"; and so the Holy Spirit must first revive or reinstate the capacity for receiving and perceiving the truth as it is in Christ. Yet our central principle holds here as elsewhere, namely, that the truth must go back to the center of the revived or awakened conscious Self in order to be recognized as truth.

May we now revert to a fundamental philosophical principle which was laid down in our first chapter, the *principle of adequacy?*

IV. The Adequacy of the Christian Conception.

The Christian conception is that of dualism and interaction in psychology. It alone gives an adequate explanation of the mind-body problem, although it does not reveal to us *how* these two parts of man's being function together; and, of course, as all psychologists know, human speculation has not solved the problem of the *how.*

What is the Biblical view for which we claim entire adequacy? It is that man's mind was created in the divine image. Now, since God is a God who knows, He was able to create beings who know. Since He is a God who knows truth, He created beings with a capacity for knowing truth. Thus in the Bible we have the only possible account of the criterion of truth that can be clearly conceived.

Test the doctrines of Materialism and Pantheism by the rule of adequacy, and see how far short they fall of account-

ing for self-conscious personality and its power to recognize truth as truth, and to rejoice in such knowledge.

Thus, by and in the large, we find the Christian World View entirely adequate to furnish us a real basis for knowing truth — not all truth, as has been said before, but as much truth as is necessary for our well-being in this life and our preparation for the life to come.

CHAPTER V

AN ALL-INCLUSIVE PHILOSOPHY

I. Christianity Inclusive of All Fundamental Truth.

Three outstanding principles have thus far been presented in the discussion of our thesis: (1) The Christian philosophy finds and describes the one adequate cause for the universe and its varied phenomena; (2) It sets forth the only adequate unifying principle and power in the diversified universe; (3) It clarifies the question of the valid and empirical criterion of truth.

Guided by the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, we shall now, in all modesty and humility, venture to make for the Christian philosophy a challenging claim — one which no one would dare to make in his own wisdom. It may be stated thus:

The Christian philosophy excludes all the fundamental errors of humanly-devised systems, and includes all their fundamental truths, plus the marvelous plan of redeeming love and power manifested in Jesus Christ.

This statement can be made good only by an explanation, somewhat in detail, of the various human systems. Of course, it is not necessary to X-ray every sub-species of speculation which every individual writer has proposed, but only those that are outstanding.

II. The Christian World View Compared with Other World Views.

1. *Materialism.*

This is rightly called a philosophy, because it claims to explain all things in terms of mechanism and material substance. It is not entitled to the name science, because no one can demonstrate scientifically that material substance is the only entity in the universe.

Now, what are the two basic truths in Materialism and Mechanism? The first is, that material substance is *real,* is an *actual* existence, a thing in itself (*das Ding an sich*). It is not an illusion and a chimera; it is not a mere "form of thought."

The Christian system accepts and includes this foundational truth. It regards the physical cosmos as a factuality, never as a mere phantasm. Everywhere in the Bible the universe is treated as real. When the Bible says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," the very language connotes the reality of the universe thus brought into existence.

But when Materialism holds that matter is the *only* existent entity, it holds a fundamental error; and this error the Christian system rejects; for it is evident on the face of it that there are also in the cosmos mental entities, endued with personality, sentiency, reason, morality, and spirituality. Given two entities, mind and matter, constituted to integrate and function together, we find an adequate explanation of all phenomena as we know them in our human world. On the basis of materialistic monism, however, none of the nobler experiences and higher qualitative values can be adequately accounted for. So the Biblical teaching proves itself philosophical and all-sided by recognizing both mind and matter as realities.

Again, when the materialist says that matter is the only existent entity, he denies the existence of God. Here Christianity comes forward with its corrective teaching, that the universe can be adequately explained only by the recognition of a Supreme Being as its Creator and Preserver.

What is the truth in the doctrine of Mechanism, now so much in vogue in academic circles? It is that the material cosmos is a machine, and that within it are many minor machines. It is a self-evident truth that insensate and nonrational things *are* mechanism. This must be so, or man as a free moral and spiritual being could not exist and function in the cosmos. The physical world must be an orderly economy and mechanism, a real automaton, in order to furnish man a steady and reliable stadium on which to carry on his activities.

But the Christian philosophy corrects the error of Mechanism by teaching that men, endued with psychical powers, are something far greater and nobler than mere Robots; that they are self-conscious, self-determining, ethical and spiritual personalities; also that the mechanical universe is not a machine that could create itself, or uphold itself, or run itself; therefore, a Supreme Architect is needed to account for the universe and its marvelous working.

The great plus sign that follows the defective and one-sided philosophy of materialistic Mechanism, besides what has been said above, is this: Beyond the doctrine of mere theism, we have the special revelation of God as the Redeemer of the world in Jesus Christ our Lord. This is a revelation from God, and is peculiar to the Christian system.

2. *Idealism.*

In terms of philosophy Idealism is the opposite of Materialism. It asserts that the only reality is mind; that matter

has no real existence as an entity; if it is not wholly an illusion, it is at least only a "form of thought" which in some way is imposed upon the human mind. The arguments adduced in support of this theory are partly based on the fact that our senses are often deceptive; we think we see things when there is nothing to see; we hear sounds that are not real; we see a mirage, and mistake it for a real landscape; to us the sun appears to rise and set, whereas in reality the earth is only revolving on its axis. Thus there are many appearances that prove to be unreal. So perhaps the material universe itself is a mere hallucination.

It is not our purpose here to present an array of arguments against this theory, as that has been done in various works on Theism and Philosophy.[1] We are simply pointing out the fundamental truths and errors of these human systems of speculation.

What is the truth in Idealism? It is this: that mind is a reality; a most significant and important reality; more important, indeed, than matter. This means that there is a real Divine Mind, and that there are in the universe real human minds. This truth the Christian system teaches, and indeed makes vital. Thus it includes the fundamental truth in the idealistic philosophy.

But when this philosophy denies the existence of material substance, which is its fundamental error, the Christian philosophy parts company with it, and declares the actual existence of the material world. In fact, Christianity proves its greater breadth by teaching that both matter and mind are verities, and that they dwell together in comity in the cosmos.

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[1] See, for example, the Author, *A System of Natural Theism*, 2d ed., pp. 98-105.

3. *Pantheism.*

This is the philosophy that identifies God and the world; the world is God and God is the world; all things are God. Spinoza's pantheism is the outstanding system of speculation in modern times. He assumed the substratum of all things to be one substance with two attributes, thought and extension; the former giving rise to mental phenomena, the latter to material phenomena. Critiques of this system may be found in many works.[2]

What is the cardinal truth in the pantheistic system? It upholds the doctrine of the immanence of God. While we cannot help thinking this to be an absurdity, for an entity cannot consistently be said to be immanent in itself, because it *is* itself; yet this is the central claim of the pantheists.

But this primary truth belongs in a much better sense to the Christian system, which teaches that God is immanent in His world — that is, present; that He is everywhere. This doctrine is taught in many passages in the Holy Scriptures, and is everywhere implied. The Psalmist said "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" etc. Paul also clearly taught the doctrine of the divine ubiquity "In Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). Besides, in the teaching of Christianity, the divine immanence implies a real and consistent presence, for it means that God is a real being who is personally present everywhere in His universe, exercising real conscious superintendence over its operations.

The basic error of Pantheism is the denial of the divine transcendence — that is, that God is greater than, and is above and beyond, the universe. Here the Christian view

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[2] See H. C. Sheldon, *Pantheistic Dilemmas and Other Essays,* pp. 13-36 (cogent and profound); the Author's work on *Natural Theism,* pp. 90-97.

is vastly superior to the pantheistic view, because the God of Christianity is a personal Being, with whom men may hold conscious personal communion; whereas in the pantheistic view God is impersonal. This philosophy is also sadly defective in that it merges matter and mind into one substance, which is impossible, as they belong to different categories. Mind is self-conscious; matter is not: mind functions in thought and volition; matter does not. Two such different entities cannot, therefore, be forcibly merged into one substance. The dualistic philosophy is much more rational. Christianity is also vastly superior to Pantheism in that it contains, in addition, the clear and uplifting revelation of redemption through the incarnate Son of God.

4. *Deism.*

This World View, prevalent in England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but with little vogue nowadays, may be regarded as practically the opposite of Pantheism. While Pantheism places all the stress on the so-called immanence of God, Deism stresses exclusively the divine transcendence. According to this view, God is a personal God (which truth is, of course, included in the Christian system); He created the universe, endued it with secondary laws and forces for running itself, and then retired from it. He has manifested no concern for it since its original creation. He has apparently gone off on a long vacation. He has never given any special revelation of Himself. The "religion of nature" is sufficient.

The deists were all more or less bitterly opposed to Christianity. They found much fault with the seeming harshness of the God of the Bible. However, when Joseph But-

ler in his great apologetic, *The Analogy*,[3] showed them that the God of nature, whom they professed to trust and worship, was no less harsh and cruel in permitting natural casualties, they had no reply to make. It seems that Deism ran its course, because people concluded that a god who retired from His universe and neglected His foster children so long, was hardly more worth while than no god at all. For this reason, no doubt, the infidelity of today has degenerated almost wholly into atheism. In the literature it produces many arguments are presented to prove the non-existence of God.

The error of the deists was their denial of the immanence of God; but this error Christianity rejects and corrects by its teaching of the whole truth, namely, that God is both transcendent and immanent. Thus it teaches the full-orbed truth. Every merely human system is more or less deficient and one-sided; whereas the system of Christianity is inclusive of all truth; and thereby it proves its competency to account for all phenomena.

5. *Natural Theism.*

Natural Theism is a useful discipline for students in colleges and theological schools, and also for others who wish to investigate the subject. Its purpose is to present arguments, derived from the study of nature and the laws of reasoning, for the divine existence. These arguments are cogent and profitable, and should convince the reason that there is a personal God who is the Creator and Preserver of the world. Sometimes men who are thus convinced in-

[3] The full title of Butler's work is, *The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature.*

tellectually are made willing to take the next logical step, and seek a real assurance of the divine reality in a Christian experience.

The truths of Natural Theism, as above stated, are truism in Christian theology. No Christian doubts that God is personal, transcendent and immanent.

While Natural Theism may be studied and taught in a way that is in perfect agreement with Christianity, yet, in and of itself, it can go little further than to show the rationality of belief in God. It cannot give absolute assurance of His existence; nor can it tell us much about His love, compassion, and interest in human affairs; it can tell us little or nothing about His willingness to help us in trouble, or to pardon our sins, or to confer upon His people an immortal destiny; and nothing whatever about a way of redemption from sin. What, therefore, Natural Theism cannot teach us, the Bible makes perfectly clear. Therefore this valuable discipline must be said to be deficient rather than erroneous; that is, it teaches the truth as far as it goes, but fails to make known to us some most important truths, truths which can be known only through the Christian revelation. Thus the need of such a revelation as the Bible gives us becomes obvious.

Profound and abstract as certain German philosophies are, the interests of truth in its entirety require a brief examination of them. We shall endeavor to make them as clear as possible.[4]

6. *The Speculations of Fichte.*

This system is called the Philosophy of the Ego and the

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[4] The author acknowledges his indebtedness in this examination to Henry C. Sheldon, *Pantheistic Dilemmas and Other Essays,* pp. 16-41.

Non-Ego. The subjective Ego is the only reality. But in order to realize itself, the Ego must have a Non-Ego from which to distinguish itself. However, this Ego begets the Non-Ego subjectively; and therefore, instead of cognizing the objective world of things and human beings as its non-ego and as an objective reality, the Ego imposes upon itself the world merely as "a form of thought." Thus it will be seen that Fichteanism is a species of Idealism in philosophy.

What shall be said of such a highly sublimated system of speculation? The truth in it is, that it recognizes the reality of the Ego — a truth which is explicit and paramount in Christianity. Here is the point of agreement. However, the error of this philosophy, namely, that the subjective Ego is the only reality, is rejected by the Christian philosophy, which just as clearly teaches the reality of the objective world. The danger of the Fichtean speculation is that it logically leads to what is known as Solypsism, that is, that the individual mind is the only existence. This is evidently an absurdity. Grant the Fichtean major premise, however, and logic will lead inevitably to the Fichtean conclusion.

Strangely enough, Fichte, in spite of his far-fetched speculations, was a firm believer in religion.

> All irreligion [he says] remains upon the surface of things, caught in the empty appearance, and just on this account presupposes a lack of power and energy of spirit, and betrays a weakness of the head as well as of character; on the contrary, religion, as rising above the appearance and pressing into the essence of things, necessarily discloses the happiest use of the powers of the spirit, the greatest profundity and penetration, and, as necessarily, connected therewith, the highest strength of character. . . . The one thing truly noble in man, the highest form of the one idea which has become clear within him, is religion.[5]

[5] Quoted by Sheldon, *ibid.*, pp. 17, 18.

In his high estimate of religion the Christian is in glad agreement. But will a philosophy of the Ego and its subjective Non-Ego accord with the realistic character of Biblical religion? We fear not. Both the Ego and the objective cosmical system must be real, if religion is to be of any practical value to the human family. Besides, to be worth while, religion must clearly recognize the existence of a personal God.

7. *The Philosophy of Schelling.*

This abstract system of speculation is known as the Philosophy of Identity. The Absolute is the Ultimate Reality. This Absolute in itself exists without contrasts and distinctions; it is the complete synthesis of them all; hence ultimately we have the identity of all things, however diverse. But the Absolute manifests itself in contrasts and differences, of which there are two — thought and nature, the subjective and the objective. In addition, this view holds that everything is spirit, or is, at least, informed by spirit or mind. It is likely, indeed, that all reality is spirit. Hence we have here something like Panpsychism, which means that everything is ultimately mind; and this again is a species of philosophic Idealism.

The truths in this system that Christianity can accept are: (1) the reality of the Absolute; (2) the reality of spiritual or psychical essence.

The errors which Christianity must discard are these: (1) That the Absolute is purely neutral and without distinctions, for if that were so, it never could manifest itself in differences and distinctions, there being no ultimate ground for them; (2) That mind is the only reality; this is the old error of Idealism, which has been previously discussed. But Christianity adds much invaluable truth to the speculation of Schelling.

8. *The Philosophy of Hegel.*

This abstruse system of speculation is known as the Philosophy of "becoming." Thought is the only reality; it is called "pure being." Yet by a logical process this pure being evolves into the world as we know it; and in some way even evolves it out of itself. Again, this thought-entity, being the *all* of things, comes to consciousness only in us finite personalities. From this analysis we must conclude that Hegelianism is a species of pantheistic Idealism.

Its truth is that spirit is real, as the Christian believer also holds. Hence Hegel did some good in opposing the materialism of his day in Germany and other countries; and his philosophy can be used to combat the materialism of our own times.

However, Hegel's Pantheism, and likewise his Idealism, must be rejected by the Christian philosopher, for reasons already presented. Another serious defect of this hypothesis is that it cancels all hope of conscious immortality, as do all forms of Pantheism; for when a man dies, his soul sinks back into the unconscious All, just as a drop of rain, having had a separate existence for a brief time, falls back into the ocean and loses its identity. In this respect Christianity is far superior.

Have we not made good our challenge — that every fundamental error of humanly devised systems of philosophy is excluded from the Christian system, while every fundamental truth is included in it — with, of course, the glorious plus sign adding the marvelous plan of redeeming grace through Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God? This is our reason for calling Christianity an all-sphered system of divine philosophy. It is the philosophy *par excellence.*

CHAPTER VI

CHRISTIANITY AND OTHER RELIGIONS

I. An Important Discipline.

The study of Comparative Religion is an important discipline in a theological seminary, as well as in other schools and for general readers.[1] Man is constitutionally a religious being. Religion is practically universal. There are many kinds of religion in the world. Hence the Christian who desires to be adequately informed will need to study the various ethnic faiths, and compare them with the Christian faith, to learn wherein they agree and wherein they differ. Such a study, if rightly conducted, will, we are persuaded, lead to the strengthening of confidence in the Christian religion as the God-given and final religion for the world.

[1] Acknowledgment of indebtedness is hereby made to the following authors: S. H. Kellogg, *A Handbook of Comparative Religion;* W. St. C. Tisdall, *Christianity and Other Faiths;* H. H. Underwood, *The Religions of Eastern Asia;* E. A. Marshall, *Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions Compared;* D. A. Stewart, *The Place of Christianity Among the Great Religions of the World;* A. Le Roy, *The Religion of the Primitives;* A. K. Reischauer, *Studies in Japanese Buddhism;* Ananda Coomaraswamy, *Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism* (the author is a Buddhist); A. Schweitzer, *Christianity and the Religions of the World;* R. E. Hume, *The World's Living Religions.* The last author is somewhat liberalistic toward Christianity, but he presents the doctrines of the ethnic religions fairly and accurately, and shows the superiority of the Christian religion over them.

As religion is an outstanding phenomenon of the world, a thoroughgoing philosophy must take cognizance of it. Therefore at this place something should be said regarding the genesis of religion in general.

II. The Origin of Religion.

On this question various opinions prevail.[2] The main problem for philosophy to consider is the question of causality and adequacy. What is the only adequate explanation of the rise and universality of religion? The theory of evolution cannot effectively account for this great phenomenon, because, if there was a time when man was not at all religious, he never could have become religious by means of mere resident forces, for the resident forces were not there. Something cannot be gotten out of nothing. Besides, causes can produce only effects that are like themselves; they cannot bring into existence entities and qualities that are new and different. Religion *is* something new and different; therefore it could not have issued by evolution from something that was not inherent in its source.

For example, the Christian religion is a religion of love. Could a religion of love have evolved from a motive of fear? Could a high and holy being like Christ be the outcome of the bloody and selfish struggle for existence? Let us think these matters through.

If a supernatural Being — God — comes into the process and introduces something new, be it an entity, a force, or a principle, that act would be a creation, not an evolution.

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[2] A number of recent works on the history of religion, dealing with its origin, have appeared, but most of them go far back of any historical records, and hence are based on speculation and fancy, and not on history or demonstrated facts, or even the valid conclusions of science.

Moreover, if God must be called in in the midst of the process, much more must He be called in at its beginning.

What, then, is the only adequate explanation of the rise of religion in *genus homo?* Our reply is, the Biblical account of man's creation in the divine image. In his very creation he was constituted a religious being, having a receptivity for personal communion with God for, be it remembered, as soon as our first parents were brought into existence, God spoke to them and gave them commands which only beings with some degree of intelligence could have understood. He said to them: "Be fruitful and multiply, and complete the earth, and subdue it," etc. (Gen 1: 27, 28). He also gave directions to the first man that connoted both intelligence and moral freedom (Gen. 2:15-18, 20).

Thus the primogenitor of the human family was endued by creation with the capacity for religion, and that capacity has come down the ages through human history by the hereditary process. Here is an adequate explanation of the general religiousness of our race. Besides, in this explanation no effort is made to get something out of nothing, or something of a higher quality out of something of a lower quality. God, the personal, all-wise and all-powerful Ultimate Personality, was certainly able to create a being who could, from the beginning of his conscious existence, hold fellowship with his Maker.

We are now confronted with a great proposition which we must attempt to explicate. We found in a previous chapter that Christianity excludes all the errors of humanly concocted systems of philosophy, and includes all their fundamental truths. We shall find that the same fact obtains in the realm of religion. In this comparison we shall strike only the high points.

III. Christianity Compared with the Ethnic Faiths.

1. *Mohammedanism.*

This system of religion, founded partly on the Old and New Testaments, accepting Christ as a great prophet, upholds some vital truths: namely, the doctrines of a personal God, the Creator and preserver of the world; of only one God (monotheism); of God's immanence and transcendence; of the conscious immortality of the soul; of a future life; of future rewards and punishments; of the resurrection of the body. It also inculcates many of the cardinal virtues.

And all this is commendable. But all these truths are included in the Christian system, as we have seen in previous sections of this work. What are the errors of the Mohammedan system that are rejected and corrected by the Christian religion? They are numerous and serious. In Islamism the almightiness of God is overstressed, while His love and fatherhood receive little attention. Mohammedans also make a mistake in thinking of God as a mere monad without inner distinctions, leading them to reject the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, which they designate as the sin of *Shirk,* that is, of blasphemy. They also look upon Christ as merely a prophet, even though he was a great one, perhaps the next to Mohammed. The doctrines of the incarnation of the Son of God and of His expiation for sin are also regarded as *Shirk.* Thus Mohammedanism knows no Redeemer, knows nothing of a God who so loved the world as to sacrifice Himself for human creatures and lift the burden of sin from the human race.

The practice of polygamy and slavery, both sanctioned by the Koran, are held as wrong, and are practically forbidden and impossible, in the Christian system. While polygamy

was permitted in some circumstances in the Old Testament dispensation, just as many other sins were permitted without being commanded or sanctioned, yet Christ taught that it was not so in the beginning, when but one man and one woman were created; from which it is evident that God originally established the institution of monogamous marriage, and never sanctioned polygamy or polyandry (cf. Gen. 1:7; 2:24; Matt. 19:3-8; Mark 10:2-12).

The arbitrary character of God is also a grave fault of the Moslem system. The doctrine of foreordination in its most unmitigated form is often inculcated in the Koran, so that God elects for salvation whom He will, irrespective of their condition; in certain cases He will even save men without repentance. In Christianity we also have a doctrine of predestination, but it is not based on the arbitrary will of a despotic God, but is intended for the comfort and security of God's people, who may know that He has decreed to save from sin and hell all who trust in Him and do His will, however powerful may be their enemies. It simply means that the ultimate divine purpose cannot be frustrated. For one who has experienced God's love and saving grace in his heart the outstanding Biblical statements on this subject are most comforting.

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. 8:28-38; cf. 9:10-17; 11:20-23; 1 Pet. 1:2; John 5:19).

The whole procedure is based upon God's foreknowledge of man's acceptance of salvation through faith in Christ. In this passage no reference is made to reprobation; God's order of procedure for the saved only is outlined. Those who are finally lost on account of their sin and impenitence come under a different order of treatment, so that foreordination has nothing to do with them. They reject the only means that has been divinely instituted for their salvation, and hence bring themselves under just condemnation. Their fault is that they "love darkness rather than light."

2. *Hinduism.*

This system inculcates some excellent virtues, which, of course, are all integral to Christian doctrine and practice. For example, equableness of temper, which is a virtue in Hinduism, also belongs to Christianity, for Christ admonished His people not to be anxious.[3] The whole doctrine of faith in God is conducive to calmness and serenity of soul.

It is sad to have to say that the defects of Hinduism are numerous. Some of them are as follows: it is fundamentally pantheistic, knowing no personal God; the caste system seems to be a part and parcel of it; so is the system of child widows; the doctrine of transmigration of souls is most distressing; asceticism is often carried to wretched extremes, leading its victims to miss the real purpose of the virtuous life; it also teaches the doctrine of *Maya,* which means that the whole phenomenal world is an illusion, a sad lapse of the infinite; the doctrine of *Maya* is carried so far as to blur moral distinctions;[4] and, saddest of all, the

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[3] See Matt. 6:25, 31, 34; in old English to "take thought" meant to be anxious or troubled; John 14:1; Acts 20:24; Phil. 4:11; 1 Tim. 6:6.

[4] Kellogg, *ut supra.*

ultimate goal of the individual, after all his painful efforts, is re-absorption into the pantheistic and impersonal All, and thus the entire loss of consciousness and personal identity.

None of these defects inhere in the Christian system. The ultimate destiny of the self-conscious individual is most attractive and inspiring, and is in striking contrast with the dismal teaching of Hinduism. In Christianity conscious life is a blessing, not a misfortune. In its essence Hinduism is pessimistic; Christianity optimistic.

3. *Buddhism.*

Here again there are flashes of truth, proving the Biblical teaching that "God hath not left Himself without a witness" in any nation (Acts 14:17). One truth in Buddhism is, that no one can find perfect satisfaction with this temporal world, and that mere earthly pleasures sooner or later cloy upon the soul and beget *ennui.* Buddhism is wrong, however, in teaching that *all* desire is vain, even the desire for personal and conscious existence. This is the doctrine of *Tanha* — that to exist at all involves desire, and to desire means pain and discontent; therefore, it is better to labor for the eradication of all desire; this leads to *Nirvana;* but even that is not the final goal, for some desire may still remain as long as there is conscious existence; therefore, the Buddhist saint[5] must press on to *Parinibbana,* which means total extinction of being; then, of course, he is released from all his misery, for, having lost all consciousness, he no longer knows any desire.

How far this view of existence falls below our Christian teaching, which holds that man's greatest blessing is to desire good things and to live forever! Such a doctrine as

[5] A Buddhist saint is called an *Arahat.*

the annihilation of man's self-conscious being has no place in the Christian system.

The doctrine of transmigration also belongs to Buddhism. Deeds done in any state must bear their inevitable fruit in another rebirth. This necessary result is known as *Karma.* No such depressing doctrine is found in Christianity. The kindly virtues inculcated in the Buddhist system are all included and enjoined in the Christian religion.

4. *Confucianism.*

The broad-minded Christian is more than willing to recognize truth and virtue wherever they are found. They corroborate the Christian principle that "God hath not left Himself without witness." It is also said of the divine Logos, the eternal Son of God, that He "was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9).

In Confucianism there are some admirable truths. It is rather a system of social ethics for this world than a religion, and that is one of its serious defects, as will presently be shown. One of its excellent maxims is Reciprocity, or the Golden Rule (although given in the negative form instead of in the positive form of Christ's teaching). Respect for ancestors and rulers is another commendable part of the Confucian system. If the social principles of Confucius were carried out in practice, or could be carried out, the world would certainly be vastly improved. However, the social teaching of Christianity is even better and more productive of salutary results than is that of the Confucian regimen. Besides, Confucianism enjoins many arbitrary, artificial, and even puerile practices.

In Christianity respect for ancestors is also a primary feature. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from

henceforth; yea, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them" (Rev. 14:13). Of righteous Abel it is said, "He, being dead, yet speaketh" (Heb. 11:4). Greatest of all, are the commands to honor father and mother and to obey parents (Ex. 20:12; Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20). On this doctrine the difference between Christianity and Confucianism is, that the former never carries respect for parents and other ancestors to the extreme of worshiping them.

Confucius practically ignored God. Several times he referred to "heaven" and the "will of heaven," but one cannot be sure whether he was using merely a proverbial expression or meant to teach the doctrine of a personal supreme being. Neither has Confucianism as originally taught any doctrine of eschatology; its purview is confined to the narrow limits of this earthly life. Here Christianity proves its vast superiority for imparting comfort and inspiration. Confucianism, like the other ethnic religions, leaves man in his natural state to struggle with his evil inner nature and his external temptations. Unlike Christianity, it knows nothing of the experience of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, who transforms a man into "a new creature in Christ Jesus," and thus reinforces his moral and spiritual life.

5. *Zoroastrianism.*

This religion was founded by Zoroaster (660-583 B. C., although the date is by no means certain), who lived and established his system in Persia, to which country it was confined for many centuries. In A. D. 637 most of its devotees were driven out of their native country by the Mohammedan Arabs, and sought refuge in India, where their religion is now known as Parseeism (from Pars, Persia).

This religion contains many principles of which Chris-

tians can approve. Some writers on comparative religion hold that, of all the living religions of the world, it makes the nearest approach to Christianity. However, we cannot agree with Dr. R. E. Hume, who, in his work previously cited,[6] declares that the Hebrews received some of their chief conceptions from the Zoroastrian cult. Nor is it true that the Old Testament teaches previous to the time of the exile that "the ultimate source of everything, including evil, is represented as the God Jehovah."[7] Such misrepresentation of Biblical teaching is responsible for much of the skepticism and agnosticism of our day. As has been shown elsewhere in this volume, God is nowhere represented as the source or cause or author of moral evil.

But what is the fundamental truth in Zoroastrianism with which we have to deal here? It is the dualism of good and evil in the universe. And the evil is real moral evil, that is, sin, and the good is real moral good, that is, true righteousness. This doctrine is, however, included in the Christian system, which recognizes a real dualism of good and evil and a real hostility between the two principles.

But the fundamental error of the Parsee system is that this dualism is from eternity in the past. From "the beginning of existence there have been two inherently incompatible, antagonistic spirits in the world." Dr. Hume states that "this doctrine of a fundamental cosmological dualism of a good God and a wicked devil fighting against one another" is a "distinctive feature of Zoroastrianism among all the religions of the world." He adds: "The two cosmic powers are co-equal from the beginning of time, and they will continue to limit each other until the end of the world."

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[6] R. E. Hume, *The World's Living Religions,* pp. 191, 192.

[7] *Ibid.,* pp. 203, 204.

The good god is known as Ahura Mazda (more frequently called Ormazd or Ormuzd) and the evil god as Angra Mainyu (usually known as Ahriman).[8] This eternal dualism of good and evil is an error that is excluded from the Biblical system, in spite of the wrong subjective interpretations of liberalism. According to the Biblical doctrine, evil is *not* eternal, but is temporal in the sense that it was brought into actuality through the wrong choice of finite free moral agents (either angels or men). Moral evil cannot be eternal, for then it would be necessitated, and hence would not be the result of free choice, and no being would be responsible for it. If evil were eternal, there would be no hope of ultimate victory over it by the good, for then good and evil would be co-equal. Moreover, this doctrine would imply a limited God — a view that is philosophically unsound and impossible, because as we have seen, an eternal being could not be finite, but must be infinite, self-existent and absolute. And, besides, a limited God could not have created and could not continue to uphold the universe. Neither could He hope finally to overcome evil and cause the right to be triumphant. There could be no ultimate time when there would be "new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." Thus the Christian view is shown to be the view *par excellence.*

Another fatal defect in Zoroastrianism is that it knows no plan of redemption through the grace and sacrifice of God. It is a system of salvation by works, leaving human nature just as it is in its weakened natural state to work out its own salvation. On this point the Christian system is much more effective and reasonable.

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[8] *Ibid.,* 202, 203.

6. *Polytheism, Animism, Fetichism.*

It does not seem to be necessary to analyze Taoism (China) and Shintoism (Japan) in detail, for we should find in making a comparison with them that Christianity rejects all their errors and accepts all their truths. So we pass on to the lowest forms of religion, those found among pagan tribes. Even here we find some adumbrations and gleams of truth. The fundamental truth in all these religions is their recognition of the supernatural world. In their contact with the natural world, they do not seem to be satisfied with mere physical realities and phenomena, as do the speculative materialists of civilized countries, but seem intuitively to sense, as it were, the presence of some power or powers beyond and above the natural realm. Here is a paramount truth that is also basic in Christianity.

Among many tribes there seems to be the recognition of a supreme God, who is the sovereign over the under-gods, and ultimately over the world. Dr. Le Roy, in his informing volume,[9] teaches that he met with no tribes even in darkest Africa which did not have some dim conception of a supreme and sovereign being. Here is another glint of a fundamental truth.

Polytheism may also have a suggestion of truth in its holding to the doctrine of many gods; for there may be here an inheritance, or a tradition, or an intuition of the triune nature of God, who has immanent diversity in His being. Perhaps the multiplication of gods is merely a corruption of the original pure doctrine. The truth is kept in its integrity through the revelation of the Holy Trinity in the Bible.

Thus we see the all-sidedness of the Christian system of

[9] A. Le Roy, *The Religion of the Primitives.*

truth and salvation. All the truths found in the ethnic religions have been divinely included — one might say, incorporated — in the Christian religion, while their errors have been mercifully excluded. To all of the ethnic faiths the "glorious gospel of the blessed God" must be added. This marvelous addition shows that a special divine revelation was necessary to make known the whole truth to mankind, while a divinely inspired Book had to be given to record it and to preserve it in its integrity.

CHAPTER VII

SOME BASIC PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY

I. Character of These Problems.

Philosophy undertakes to discuss certain fundamental problems in order to attain, as far as possible, an adequate World View.[1] The word "discuss" is here used advisedly; for, after all, philosophy does not and cannot solve the profound problems it proposes, although it honestly and laboriously goes as far as human scientific and speculative wisdom can go.

But can Christian philosophy solve these problems? Let it be frankly confessed that it does not attempt to solve them in such a way as to explain their fundamental mystery. For example, no revelation is made in the Bible as to the *essence* of mind and matter. We can go only so far as to say, the Bible clearly and definitely teaches that there are two kinds of essence in the cosmos, psychical and physical; but what they are basically, that is, in their intrinsic essence, human wisdom cannot say, and divine wisdom has not revealed. As was said in a previous section of this volume, in some respects the Bible is only "a little candle," while in other respects it is a "big light."[2] Most relevantly does the Bible say: "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and our

[1] For a brief and luminous discussion, see J. G. Hibben, *The Problems of Philosophy.*

[2] Ps. 119:105: "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

children forever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deut. 29: 29).

However, we maintain that, while Christian philosophy does not explain the immanent essence of things, it does set forth in every case the one hypothesis that adequately accounts for the salient facts, and thus aids us in formulating an all-sphered World View. Let us attend as concisely as possible to some of the basic philosophical problems.

II. Theology: The Problem of God.

In a previous chapter we have given some consideration to this problem.[3] We have seen that the hypothesis of the Christian doctrine of God adequately accounts for the origin and continued existence of the cosmos and all its diversified phenomena, and that it is the only hypothesis that *is* adequate, therefore, as rational beings, we ought to accept that view. So much progress having been made, we may proceed to examine the greatness and full-orbed character of the Christian conception of God.

1. *The Divine Attributes.*

The Holy Scriptures ascribe to God all the attributes that must logically belong to the Divine Being, who is the Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer of the universe, and thus proves its broad, full-toned, and adequate character. And these ascriptions are made in a most natural and effective way, without labored dialectical processes, giving the impression of having been divinely revealed rather than conceived by human effort. If there is a God — and why

[3] Dr. Hibben (see his work, *ut supra*) does not treat this thesis as one of the outstanding problems of philosophy; yet in his second chapter he deals with it succinctly, and seems to take the theistic World View throughout his volume. In *Christian* philosophy, however, the doctrine of God must have the primacy.

should we doubt it? — we feel that He ought to be just such a Being as the Bible portrays. Note His outstanding attributes.

The Bible everywhere teaches that God has *personality.* He knows Himself, using constantly the pronouns of the first person; He knows other objects; He has feeling and self-determination. All these are qualities that connote personality. As we have previously seen, God must be personal, or personal beings, such as men are, never could have come into existence. No effect can be greater than, or different from, its cause.

The Bible assigns to God *omniscience,* which includes infinite wisdom and perfect foreknowledge. If He did not have archetypal knowledge, a contingency would surely some time arise for which He was unprepared, and hence His universe, so vast and diversified, would be hurled to ruin; and it would logically follow that He Himself would be involved in the catastrophe.

Another necessary attribute of the Divine Being is *omnipotence,* an attribute also ascribed to Deity in Holy Writ. Jesus said: "With God all things are possible" (Matt. 19:26). Elsewhere the Bible says: "Is anything too hard for God?" (Gen. 18:14). The context here shows that the negative answer is the only right one. In fact, Jeremiah gives the correct answer: "Ah, Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched-out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee" (Jer. 32:17; cf. also Mark 10:27; Luke 1:37; John 17:2; Rom. 1:20). If God were not all-powerful, He could not uphold this vast universe. We cannot help feeling and believing that He would some time become exhausted. Thus the Bible is right in ascribing omnipotence to God.

The same line of argument applies to the divine attribute

of *omnipresence*, which the Biblical writers assign to God (Ps. 139:7-17; Acts 17:27). If He were not everywhere personally present, He could not watch over His creation perfectly, and chaotic ruin would be the result.

A similar method of argumentation proves the *eternity, self-existence, infinity,* and *immutability* of the Supreme Being, all of which attributes are ascribed to Him in the Bible. He must be eternal, for it would be absurd to suppose He could have created Himself. He must be self-existent by virtue of His eternity, for there can be no other being on whom He would be dependent. No limitation can be placed upon an eternal and self-existent Being; therefore He must be infinite. If He were mutable in character, that would indicate some imperfection in His Being, which would be impossible with an eternal and infinite God.

In many places in Holy Writ the attribute of *righteousness* is ascribed to God. Abraham, in his intercession for Sodom and Gomorrah, asks, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18:25). The implication, of course, is that He will do right. Says the psalmist: "Thy right hand, O God, is full of righteousness" (Ps. 48:10). "With righteousness shall He judge the world, and the people with equity" (Ps. 98:9). "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne" (Ps. 97:2; Amer. Rev.). "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day" (2 Tim. 4:8). The seraphim, who dwell nearest to the throne of God cry to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His Glory" (Isa. 6:3). Jesus said, "Holy Father," and, "There is none good but God" (John 17:11; Matt. 19:17). Throughout the Bible we see ethical monotheism set forth in a most striking way.

In ascribing the attributes of righteousness, holiness, and justice to the Supreme Being, Christianity reveals its depth and all-sidedness.[1] This fact may be shown in several ways. If God were not immanently righteous — that is, in His inherent being — there could be no righteousness or moral quality in the world. Unless He Himself is holy, He could not have made the cosmos a moral economy, because the moral never could have emerged by means of resident forces from the non-moral.

Again, morality — or righteousness — can be ascribed only to rational personalities; never to mere things, like rocks, plants and animals. Therefore, when we go back to the Ultimate Ground of Right, we must find a rational personality — that is, God. Besides, God must be righteous from eternity; for if there ever was a time when He was not righteous, He never could have become righteous.

This method of argument, however, will not hold with regard to the origin of evil; or sin is something that is brought into actuality through the wrong choice of finite moral agents. It is something that ought not to be; therefore it cannot be eternal. That which is eternal must forever be the same.

According to the Holy Scriptures, one of the outstanding divine attributes is *love.* Many Biblical passages might be cited in proof, but only a few are necessary. God spoke thus to Israel: "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee" (Jer. 31:3). Our Lord said: "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son," etc. (John 3:16). Said the apostle John: "God is love"; "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be

[1] While in technical theology these three terms are distinguished, they can be treated here as practically synonymous.

called the children of God"; "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:8, 10; 3:1). The sending of the Son of God into the world to save and bless the human family is always represented as having been motivated by the divine love.

But God not only loves the world with the love of complacency; His love is represented in Holy Writ as sacrificial love. It involved a sacrifice on the part of the Father to send the Son to suffer on the cross; it involved self-sacrifice on the part of the Son to suffer and die for the race. This is true love — the love that is self-abnegating. Other love may be mere sentiment or affectation. "But God commendeth His love to us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." He even died for people who were unlovely and unworthy of His love. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"

Not only is this Christian doctrine comforting and uplifting; it also has a philosophical basis, which makes it all the more strengthening to Christian faith. The argument may be presented in this way: There is love in the world, even sacrificial love. The mother robin will die for her helpless brood, as more than one has been known to do. Human parents suffer more or less for the sake of their children, and some suffer for them to an intense degree. Whence came this high and holy principle of love which leads to self-immolation for the sake of its object? Could it have arisen from nothing? Could it have sprung from insensate material substance, or from a gory, selfish, age-long struggle for existence? Surely not, for every effect must have an adequate cause, and no effect can be fundamentally different from its cause.

Therefore, to find the real source of the principle of love, whether complacent, compassionate, or self-immolating, we must go back to the eternal personal Being, who is actuated by that holy principle. There is no other way to account for love in the phenomenal world. Thus we see that it must be true, as the Scriptures teach, that God is a God of self-sacrificing love. Here we have the explanation of the gift of His Son to the sinful and wretched world of humanity, and of the willingness of the Son to take man's place under the law. If the Son of God made no real sacrifice for us, then all God's professions of love to man are as "sounding brass and a clanging cymbal."

Should the objection be raised at this point that sin must also be eternal, our reply again is: Moral evil is something that can be brought into actuality only by the wrong choice of a finite moral agent. Therefore it cannot be eternal, as are the right and the good; for if evil were eternal, it would be born of necessity, and thus would not, after all, be sin in the sense of guilt. Thus hatred and selfishness cannot have their source in the being and will of God. Only love can be eternal, because love is based upon truth and righteousness. So we have proved that self-abnegating love is an eternal attribute of the Divine Being.

Anent the whole argument in this section, we think we have shown that Christianity ascribes to the Divine Being precisely those attributes and perfections that He ought to have, and must have, in order to be God; in order to be the Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer of the universe. If He were minus any one of the qualities described, He would not be competent for the task that the phenomenal world requires of the Ultimate Being.

2. *The Divine Relations.*

In setting forth the relations of God to His universe, the Bible also reveals its well-poised and all-sided philosophy. Let us note. It teaches that God is both *transcendent* and *immanent.* In this respect Pantheism and Deism are one-sided: the former overstresses the divine immanence and rejects the divine transcendence; the latter does the reverse. Christianity reveals both. In order to create and uphold the universe, God must transcend it; and in order to care personally for all His creatures, He must be immanent in His universe. At the same time, Christianity holds the doctrine of the divine transcendence and immanence much more consistently and fundamentally than do its rival philosophies.[5]

The Christian philosophy also teaches that God is the one *Absolute Being.* He must be absolute, for He has existed from eternity, and therefore the cause of His existence is in Himself. There is nothing on which the eternal Being can be dependent. Yet His absolute character is not regarded in the Christian system as it is in some humanly devised systems, as if He were a solid, immobile, immovable monad, without diversity and movement of life and essence; but He is personal, loving and holy, and is, therefore, capable of sustaining a vital personal relation to finite entities, whom

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[5] In his recent book, *The Doctrine of God,* Dr. J. K. Mozley expresses most acutely the Biblical conception of the divine transcendence and immanence: "At the same time, the life of God never begins to be identified with the cosmic order, as is the case in pantheistic systems. In Hebraic as distinct from Hellenic thought, the life of God is conceived of as consistently in touch with the world, while consistently distinct from it" (p. 39). Over against the pantheistic conceptions, Dr. Mozley says: "If God is only another name for the natural order, He cannot remedy what defects appear in that order" (p. 28).

He Himself brought into existence. Here again Christianity proves its full-orbed character.

Christianity also teaches that God is *infinite* in His being, person, and attributes. This must be so, else He would not be eternal and self-existent. Yet, infinite though He is, Christianity teaches that He is capable of self-limitation, by virtue of the fact that He is a free personality. Thus He does not and need not always exercise all His attributes to their full extent, but can so limit Himself as to provide room for the free acts of finite persons endued with volitional powers. He is capable of omnipotent self-restraint when, in His wisdom and love, He sees sufficient reason for such self-control. This may be illustrated thus: A strong man may now exert all his strength; now he may exert only a part of it; now he may hold it altogether in leash, so that he will not hurt the weakest creature. So God, although infinite, is able to limit Himself in the exercise of some of His attributes when He sees sufficient reasons for doing so.

III. Ontology: The Problem of Being.

Of course, Christian philosophy does not and human philosophy cannot, solve the problem of ultimate being — that is, they cannot decipher what matter and mind are *per se.* Long ago the Greek philosophers were working on the problem of the *hule,* the *stuff* of which things are composed (in the Latin, *materia*). However, Christian philosophy teaches positively that such entities are really existent, and that, being existent and real, they explain the universe much better than do other conceptions. For, while it is true that we perceive only the *phenomena,* not the *noumena,* of things (the things *per se*); yet reason leads us to believe that there must be the latter or there could not be the former. Mere nothing, surely, could produce no manifestation. The

necessary basis of the phenomenon is the noumenon (*das Ding an sich*).

The three outstanding views on this thesis are *Pluralism, Monism,* and *Dualism.* The first-named view is that the universe is made up of many parts, like atoms and molecules, which cannot be reduced to one unit of measure or kind. In fact, science in late years has discovered more primary and irreducible elements than were formerly known. While these are facts which cannot be controverted, it seems reasonable to believe that all these material elements are composed of one kind of *stuff,* which we call material substance. Of course, pure materialism cannot find the ultimate unifying principle in matter; yet there must be some power that holds these various elements in a unity of action, or the world would be a chaos, not a universe. We have already found that the only adequate unifying principle and power in the cosmos is an infinite psychical Personality, whom we call God. But that argument brings us back to the Christian view of Dualism — that is, of God and the universe.

As to Monism, it is known under three heads, Materialism (matter the only substance), Idealism (mind the only entity), and Pantheism (matter and mind consubstantiated into one substance). We have already seen the ineffectiveness of these attempts at explaining the universe, and so need not repeat our statements here.

What, then, is the only adequate view of the essence of being as we observe its phenomena in the universe? It surely is the philosophy which recognizes two distinct kinds of essences or entities or noumena, namely, mind and matter. The Infinite Mind — God — adequately accounts for the origin and continued existence of the material cosmos. Thus

we hold to the doctrine of the reality of God and the universe.

The doctrine of the reality of mind and matter in human beings is the best explanation of all the phenomena of human life and experience, from those of the lowest to those of the highest qualitative value. On the assumption that the body is a real entity, we can explain all our physical or sensuous experiences; on the assumption of the reality of our minds, it is easy to explain all our purely psychical experiences, like the perception of right and wrong, of qualitative values, of a personal God as one with whom we may have fellowship. On the ground of mere monism and pluralism, how many of the finest experiences of the soul remain unexplained!

Let it not be supposed that we hold the view that Christian philosophy reveals the *essence* of things, the *stuff,* either psychical or physical, of which entities are composed. That is a problem which will probably be solved only when we no longer "see through a glass darkly, but face to face" (1 Cor. 13:12). The point gained by our philosophy, based on the teaching of the Bible, is this: that mind and matter are real entities, not mere figments of deluded souls. And that is great gain for the thinking mind and the believing heart. We may rejoice that we do not live in a world of hallucination, but in a world of sane reality.

IV. Psychology: The Problem of the Mind.

This is merely mentioned here to fill out the list of the problems with which philosophy deals. It has already been shown in this volume that the only adequate way to account for human knowledge and experience is to accept the doctrine of the mind as a real self-conscious entity, able to function through sense, intellect, emotion, and will. Mind

and matter are such different essences, function in such different ways, and belong to such different categories, that they cannot possibly be merged into one substance, making a *tertium quid.* For example, mind thinks, feels, and wills; matter can perform no such acts. Mind and matter joined together in harmonious activities, each of its own kind, make up the world of reality. This is the fully rounded Christian view.

V. Epistemology: The Problem of Knowing.

We have previously dealt with this problem, and have found that the only way to account for our knowledge is to accept the view that the mind is a self-conscious essence or entity, dwelling in the body, and so constituted as to be able to respond to the stimuli which come to it from the various sources within the range of its experience. If there is no such a self-conscious agent as the mind, the problem of epistemology finds no solution. There is no possible explanation of how men know anything. But just as a matter is constituted by its Maker to exist and act in a mechanical way, so the mind is constituted by its Creator to function in a thinking, reasoning, emotional, and conative way. If we are willing to believe in the ready-made constitution of material substance, why not apply the same common-sense principle to the entity we call mind?

VI. Morality: the Problem of Right and Wrong.

1. *The Ground of Right.*

As has already been said, we attribute morality only to rational personalities, never to blocks and stones, vegetables or animals. Even people who are insane are not regarded as capable of moral action and responsibility. Now, this being so, as it surely is, when we push our quest back to

the Ultimate Ground or Source of Right, we must trace it to a moral personality; and that means God, the ultimate Being. Here again we have the view of Christian theism.

2. *The World a Moral Economy.*

In and of itself the world of matter and vegetable and animal life is not moral, for it cannot rightly be called rational personality. It does not, therefore, recognize moral distinctions. However, it is so constituted as to afford a stadium for the activities of free beings. Even in the plane below the ethical, it would be impossible for man to live in the cosmos if he could not exercise freedom of choice. To illustrate, suppose a man were walking down a hill, and should arrive at the brink of a precipice, if he did not have the power to determine his action by changing his course, he would be impelled to go forward and would plunge over the cliff to certain death. Thus men have innumerable opportunities to choose, and, indeed, must often choose, in order to preserve their very existence.

No less is it true that the world affords man many opportunities to elect between right and wrong. If he follows a path or road that leads to the house of worship or a place of ethical inspiration, the earth will uphold him as he pursues his way. On the other hand, if he chooses to go to a place of evil environment, the roadway will also sustain him as he proceeds.

Now, since the world is constituted a moral economy and an arena for moral action, the question arises, Whence has it come? Could a non-moral source bring forth a moral regime? Impossible! We insist that no effect can be greater than, or different from, its cause. So to account for the world as a moral administration, we must go back to a Being who was competent to create and constitute it in that

way. This leads us back to a personal God who is Himself a moral agent. And here again the Christian philosophy is the only one found to be adequate.

3. *Man a Free Moral Agent.*

That man has a conscience which distinguishes between right and wrong, and a free will by which he is able to choose between them, scarcely seems to require any argument, seeing that he functions in this world as a moral being. Instead of speculating as to what we think man ought to be, suppose we stand on scientific ground by considering him as he is. His whole experience tells him that he is a free moral being.

Once again the crucial questions arise, Whence came a moral being such as man is? How came he to be able to perceive moral distinctions and to feel the difference and antagonism between right and wrong? Could insensate matter produce such a moral being? Could the non-ethical bring forth the ethical? No! A result can come only from its like. The cause must be adequate to produce the effect. Therefore man, a moral being, could be brought into existence only by a moral Being who was able to create him in His own image. Again we are logically forced to accept the Christian philosophy.

4. *The Origin of Evil.*

Should this question be sprung again at this point, the reply is: Evil is something that is not eternal and infinite, else it would not be moral evil; it was brought into actuality through the mischoice of a free and finite being. It is something that ought not to be; therefore it cannot belong to the pristine constitution of the universe. Being finite, it can be controlled and finally mastered by the omnipotent and omniscient Creator. This is the only philosophy that affords

any hope and comfort to souls struggling with the power of evil.

VII. Eschatology: The Doctrine of Human Destiny.

At this point we introduce a problem that is not usually treated in works on secular philosophy; but it cannot be omitted from a work that deals with religion.[6]

Almost all people — perhaps all who are in their native condition, unspoiled by dialectical gymnastics — cherish some belief in a future life. The devotees of Hinduism are no exception; for, while they may not believe in the doctrine of a final conscious immortality, but hold to the doctrine of reabsorption into the impersonal All; yet long ages must pass before the Hindu disciple attains to the ultimate goal of reabsorption. Meanwhile he must pass through many transmigrations.

If the universe is composed only of material substance, how could it produce religion even as an epiphenomenon? How could it put into the human soul the conception of, and the desire for, a future state of existence? Surely if nothing is existent but matter, matter has produced some marvelous effects! Apparently it possesses the magical power of bringing something out of nothing. It is a wonder-worker, a miracle-monger. But if Christianity is true, it is easy to account for the universal sway of religion with its concomitant of a future life. "If a man die, shall he live again?" is an age-old question (Job 14:14). It can be answered only on the conception that there is a personal God who created man with a desire to live forever and with a natural reaction against the idea of annihilation.

In favor of the Christian religion and philosophy is the

[6] Dr. Hibben, *ut supra*, omits it from his catalogue of philosophical problems.

exalted ethical and spiritual character of the future life depicted in the Holy Scriptures. "In thy presence there is fullness of joy, and at thy right hand there are pleasures forever more," chants the psalmist (Ps. 16:11). Jesus said: "In my Father's realm are many homes; if it were not so, I would have told you" (John 14:2). Many texts refer to and describe the heavenly life in a most inspiring way. As examples, see the following: 2 Cor. 5:1; 2 Tim. 1:10; 4:8; 1 Pet. 1:3, 4; Rev. 5:9, 10; 7:9-17; 21:10-27; 22:1-5. The Apocalypse of St. John employs much attractive imagery in picturing the beauty, purity, richness, and blessedness of the celestial life. In all of them there is not the remotest suggestion of anything impure, offensive, and sensuous. Speaking of the New Jerusalem, the revelator writes: "And there shall in nowise enter into it anything that defileth, or worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." And who are they whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life? They are those who "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Thus, according to the Holy Scriptures, heaven is a place of self-conscious life, immaculate purity, holy joy, blissful fellowship with the good, and varied employments of praise and rejoicing. The life "over there" is not depicted as one of tiresome monotony, but there is "fullness of joy." "Pleasures forever more" must mean endless variety. The portrayal of man's immortal career is of the most arresting and satisfying kind, with never a coarse and prurient suggestion.

Now, the question springs up in the mind, Whence came such ideas of the future state? Such elevated conceptions are certainly a part of the system of Christianity. Since every effect must have an adequate cause, it is evident that these high and holy ideas of the celestial estate could not

have come up from insensate material substance, nor from the incarnadined struggle for existence. A good, holy, and beneficent God — yes, a God of self-sacrificing love — is the only adequate producing cause of the marvelous descriptions of man's future inheritance as it appears in the Bible. Once again the Christian philosophy has been shown to be the only adequate explanation of the grand effect.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

I. A Difficult Problem.

It is pertinent to say that the Philosophy of History presents some of the most perplexing problems that can engage the human mind. Some of them may be succinctly stated.

Much of history seems to be a welter; it is hard to discover in it an orderly and consistent system or a moral or even a logical sequence of events. Who can, for example, explain the purpose of pagan tribes, like the Hottentots, the Kaffirs, the Australasians or the American Indians, who lived their wild life for centuries, and died generation after generation without the light of the redemption brought to the world by Jesus Christ? What was the purpose of the Aztecs, the Toltecs, and the Incas, all of whom have practically perished from the earth after centuries of unenlightened existence? Besides, what is the meaning of millions of individual lives which have been lived in the misery and darkness of heathenism and have gone out without the knowledge of a special divine revelation? These are questions that well may daunt us.

If all nations and tribes had had God's special revelation throughout their history, the problem would be much easier of solution; but the troublesome fact is that generations have come and gone into eternity without having been vouchsafed a special display of God's gracious plan of redemption.

Another difficulty confronts us: A period of progression has so often been followed by an era of retrogression. Civilizations have arisen, have flourished for a time, and then an apparently inevitable decadence has set in which has eventuated in a state of barbarism. Think of the great nations of the past whose names are only a memory, leaving only ruins to tell the story of their former greatness and their sad decline. History seems to run in cycles. It is like the tides of the ocean which rise in waves for a time and then recede, only to repeat the process, apparently with some rhythm, but with little reason. So outstanding is this phenomenon of the rise and fall of civilization, that Oswald Spengler, in *The Decline of the West,* has built up a kind of philosophy upon what might be called cyclism.

In view of these difficulties, we do not wonder that Sir Arthur Keith has recently characterized the question, "Why are we here?" as "that great riddle," of whose solution he seems to be in great doubt and which he certainly leaves suspended very much in the air.[1] Being a rationalist, Sir Arthur refuses to consider judicially the Christian solution of any problem.

A good many works on philosophy find it convenient to omit any special discussion of the problem of history. Among the exceptions is Dr. A. M. Fairbairn, who discusses the problem quite learnedly in his classical work; yet it must be confessed that the chapter devoted to it is the least satisfactory in the book.[2]

But is the solution of our problem utterly hopeless? From the Christian viewpoint it is not, as we hope to show in

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[1] See his *Concerning Man's Origin,* pp. x (foreword) and 129.

[2] See Fairbairn, *The Philosophy of the Christian Religion,* chap. V, pp. 169-185.

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subsequent sections. Just now, however, we must give brief attention to another matter of importance.

II. Various Non-Christian Views.

1. *Agnosticism.*

Some men simply throw up their hands and give up the problem. But agnosticism always surrenders too easily; it is the resort of the daunted mind. As has been said acutely, "Agnosticism literally commits suicide, and then strangely keeps on talking." [3] The same writer says in reference to agnosticism's attitude toward the problem of the divine Being: "Men simply cannot, in any legitimate sense, pray to and worship an Unknown Power, or an Infinite Conundrum, or an Eternal Interrogation-point." [4]

It is sad to think of men living in the world and ever replying to the fundamental question, "Why are we here?" with a hopeless, "We don't know; nobody knows; nobody ever will know." Truly the apostle describes vividly the despondent temper of agnosticism: "If in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. 15: 19).

In many ways this universe seems to be a rational economy, while we ourselves are rational beings, acting for the most part with a purpose; therefore the reasonable inference is that a real and worth-while purpose must actuate the Supreme Power that brought the universe into existence and sustains its ongoing. There are too many evidences of design (teleology) in the cosmos to permit the view that it is a mere *happen-so,* or even that no purpose in it is discoverable, or discernible, or revealed.

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[3] J. H. Snowden, *The Personality of God,* p. 57.

[4] *Ibid.,* p. 28. Cf. L. S. Keyser, *A System of Natural Theism,* pp. 113-115.

2. *Evolution.*

The theory of naturalistic evolution gives a very uncertain and wavering answer as to the ultimate purpose of human life and the goal of human history. We have read many works by the evolutionists of this school, and must say that their conclusions usually sound a good deal like a "sob story"; at least, it is quite pathetic, not to say lugubrious. One of them, after a vigorous polemic covering many pages, ends in a kind of wail: "Eventually the light of the sun will die out, or the planets will be torn to fragments by the attraction of a passing star. The solar system will pass into oblivion, and the purpose of its existence, if indeed there is a purpose, will remain forever unknown." Unmeasured ages of evolution, and then — the bursting of a bubble, the sizzle of a skyrocket![5]

Sir Arthur Keith, in his recently issued book, gives anything but a cheerful outlook upon the future of humanity. He says: "But if we bring a clear and cool judgment to bear on what we know concerning man in past times, we cannot claim to be, in a physical sense, better or higher beings than the men who founded civilization 6,000 years ago. And yet, when we go back to still earlier times, and see man emerge from a form little higher than an ape and reach his present estate, the hope swells up within us that in some way we may yet circumvent the limits of civilization and rise to the status of super-humanity."[6]

Although Henry Fairfield Osborn is not to be classed with the atheists, his late utterances concerning the outcome of evolution are even more doleful and disheartening than those of Keith just quoted. Says Osborn near the end of his recent book:

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[5] See the Author, *The Problem of Origins*, pp. 198, 199.

[6] Sir Arthur Keith, *Concerning Man's Origin*, p. 129.

"A burning question of the day is whether man is destined to rise or fall, and many and varied answers are being attempted. . . . The rise of primitive and uncivilized man is subject to the same laws as those which prevail throughout the animal kingdom, until human civilization steps in and interferes with the natural order of things. Thus when man begins to specialize and human races begin to intermingle, nature loses control. It appears that the finest races of men, like the finest races of lower animals, arose when nature had full control, and that civilized man is upsetting the divine order of human origin and practice." [7]

Again: "Racial deterioration appears to prevail throughout the world today; our policy seems to be that of care for the individual, neglect for the race. . . . Care for the race, even if the individual must suffer — this must be the keynote of the future." [8] His book closes with an interrogation point: "Have we gained the universe and lost the spirit? Shall we ever again be as 'wise and true in aim of soul' as were the great comrades of Aeschylus? Is man now rising to Parnassus?" [9]

Evolution, therefore, by ending with a question mark, proves its ineffectiveness for solving the problem of the philosophy of human history. It halts and limps; it has no firm and stately tread.

3. *The Cycle Theory.*

The Hindu philosophy teaches that the history of the universe consists of a dreary series of cycles or ages; "each in succession is worse than that which preceded it, till now has come the *Kali Yug,* which is the worst of all, and which will

[7] H. F. Osborn, *Man Rises to Parnassus,* pp. 184, 185.
[8] *Ibid.,* p. 186.
[9] *Ibid.,* p. 192.

be terminated by the *Mahapralaya,* or 'Great Catastrophe,' in which the world of men, with the earth on which they live, shall finally perish. . . . Of a final everlasting triumph of righteousness Hinduism, like Islam, knows nothing." [10]

Somewhat similar to this view, although of a more scientific and less mystical character, is that of Oswald Spengler in his striking book, *The Decline of the West.*

However, the cycle theory is merely an attempt to describe a process or a serial order. But that is not to formulate a philosophy. It attempts no answer to the crucial question, Why are we here? What is the purpose of human history? Indeed, if human history simply consists of a succession of waves, moving on and on forever, life has no meaning; history has no goal; no worth-while purpose can be predicated for the cosmos and its rational and sentient personalities. Surely there is a better explanation of human life than an unending series of meaningless cycles can afford.

III. The Christian View.

1. *The Origin of Things.*

If any light is cast on the problem of human history and the history of the cosmos, we believe it must come from Christianity and its Source Book. When we go back into the Old Testament, we learn how the universe and the human family came into existence. It was by the creative act of an all-wise and all-powerful personal God. At once light begins to gleam upon our pathway, and our problem no longer seems to be such an inexplicable riddle. And why? Because if God, as the Bible depicts, created the universe and man, it is reasonable to believe that He constituted them for a purpose in correspondence with His own character

[10] S. H. Kellogg, *A Handbook of Comparative Religion,* p. 108.

and wisdom. Even we, who are finite in knowledge and cannot understand all the mysteries of our own existence, may reasonably infer that God "saw the end from the beginning," and that He "doeth all things well."

It is competent to be said at this place, once for all, that the appeal to God here and elsewhere in this treatise is not to be regarded as *Deus ex machina,* so greatly scorned by some scientists and philosophers, but is a legitimate induction from all the known facts. All philosophies seek for the final cause of the universe. Our contention here is that the Christian theistic World View is the only one that adequately explains all the data. *Deus ex machina* is wrong only when it is used to bar the way of free scientific inquiry. The present writer would never use it for that purpose. Some men use mere natural law in the *ex machina* way, but, as has been previously shown, they fail to explain ultimately any of the world's phenomena, even those of the merely materialistic order.

2. *Biblical History.*

In Biblical history, containing God's special revelation, we may see examples of God's general interest in and solicitude for the race. He selected certain men to whom He gave special revelations from time to time. Those revelations, however, were not given for the sole benefit of their individual recipients, but were to be proclaimed to others. To Abraham it was said, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Jonah was sent to wicked Nineveh to bring the people to repentance. The prophets proclaimed God's messages to many nations besides the people of Israel. From the beginning Jehovah is known as the God of heaven and earth.[11]

[11] The author is convinced that the liberalistic Biblical critics are wrong in their view that the Bible teaches anywhere that Jahveh was

While Jesus, according to the New Testament revealed His doctrines to a comparatively few men, He commanded them to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation."

God's treatment of His ancient people furnishes examples of His treatment of all nations according to their light and opportunity. For instance, when they did right, He approved and rewarded them, and *vice versa.* So He treats all the nations of the earth in effect, although the method is not so articulate and the historical records not so definitely made and carefully preserved. Perhaps therefore He had a purpose and a program for all nations and tribes. Some clues to this doctrine are given in the New Testament. Peter said at Caesarea to Cornelius and his company: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him and doeth righteousness is accepted with Him" (Acts 10:34, 35). Paul intimates the same truth: "For when the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves" (Rom. 2:14; read also verse 15). Paul's address at Athens should also be read (Acts 17:22-29).

A few qualifying words must needs be said here. It does not always occur in human history that nations and individuals receive their just recompense of reward in this life, nor that their suffering is due to their own personal sins. Some-

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"a tribal god" or "a clan god." The people of Israel, prone to pervert and stray away from God, may sometimes have held the henotheistic conception of Jahveh, but God and His inspired prophets never taught such a doctrine. The proof of this statement is elaborated in the author's book, *Contending for the Faith,* chap. V. This book is now out of print, but copies may be consulted in various libraries. Cf. also A. Troelstra, *The Name of God in the Pentateuch.*

times the innocent must suffer with the guilty and even in their stead. There is the undeniable fact of vicarious suffering in the human world. Sometimes the sins of others bring suffering upon parents, children and nations.

Is there, according to the Christian view, any rational explanation of these many seeming — and no doubt real — miscarriages of justice? Accepting the whole teaching of the Bible, we do not look upon the problem as being entirely inexplicable. For instance, sometimes afflictions serve a refining and cleansing purpose. Often they aid men in growth in grace and virtue. Note our Lord's teaching: "Every branch in me that beareth fruit, he cleanseth (pruneth) it, that it may bring forth more fruit" (John 15:2). One of the prophets reports God as saying: "I will bring a third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people, and they shall say, The Lord is my God" (Zech. 13:9).

Not only so, but according to Biblical teaching, the doctrine of immortality enters to relieve the whole strained situation. Its promise is that in the coming era even-handed justice shall be done to every soul and every nation; every wrong shall be righted; every recompense distributed according to the rule of righteousness. There shall be abundant added glory for every affliction endured patiently and trustfully. "For our light affliction, which is but for the moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17); "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

A helpful light is cast on our problem by an incident in the life of Christ. He and His disciples met a man who was born blind, when the disciples asked Him this question: "Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus replied: "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him" (John 9:2, 3). Subsequently He healed the blind man, and thus manifested a divine work. From this incident we may learn that God has a purpose in permitting affliction, and that in some way it will at last, if not at once, justify His ways to man.

If the Christian interpretation of trial and disappointment is not the true one, no satisfactory explanation can be given, but we must be content to grope our way in the darkness of agnosticism.

3. *The Unity of the Race.*

Instead of calling man a rational or religious *animal,* let us call him *Genus Homo.* Because he has some features in common with animals is no more a reason for calling him an animal than it would be to call him a vegetable because there are some homologies between him and the plant kingdom. He constitutes a genus all his own. He interbreeds with no animal, and is capable of many, rational, self-conscious and religious thoughts and acts that are unknown in the animal realm.

But, with all its diversity, the race of mankind is a unity. The various peoples can interbreed, and the offspring continues to be fertile. The apostle knew this, for he said: "He (God) hath made of *one* all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after

Him and find Him, though He is not far from every one of us; for in Him we live and move and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring" (Acts 17:26-28).

Here certainly is a passage that gives many clues to a philosophy of history. It indicates the unity of the race; He hath made all nations of "one" — not of "one blood," as the King James version has it. The apostle surely means that all races have sprung from one common genetic head, namely, Adam. This statement agrees with other statements by the same apostle: "As in Adam all die" (1 Cor. 15:22); "For Adam was first formed, then Eve" (1 Tim. 2:13); "For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man: for neither was the man created from the woman, but the woman from the man" (1 Cor. 11:8, 9).

With this doctrine of the common origin and consequent solidarity of the human family, the science of ethnology agrees. This being true, it is reasonable to conclude that God had a purpose in the beginning for all the races that should descend from the common primogenitor. If mystery surrounds the purpose of many nations and tribes, what has been inferred is reasonable, and therefore approaches a *rationale* of history, and thus gives us at least some glimpses of a philosophy of the same. Otherwise we can see no hope of answering the question, Why have such peoples as the primitive races been permitted to come into being? On the basis of Christian teaching we may cherish the hope and belief that no nation or tribe has lived in vain; that each has contributed something to the divine plan and purpose.

Read over again the foregoing passage from Paul's address at Athens (Acts 17:26-28). It states that God made all nations and determined their times and habitations, in

order that they should seek Him if haply they might find Him. This teaching is most significant and enlightening, for it expresses God's care over all the nations of the earth and His determination regarding them. One purpose is that they should seek God and find Him. Just what will be the ultimate destiny of each nation and tribe has not been revealed to man; but our Christian philosophy leads us to believe that "the Judge of all the earth will do right" (Gen. 18:25). If we do not have here the basis of a rational teleology for the human race, none is to be found.

4. *Evidences of an Increasing Purpose.*

Unless men have fallen into utter agnosticism and hopelessness, they feel that, somehow, they can perceive in human history a development, a general advance toward better things. If that were not so, how could we account for man's progress from primitive conditions to his present state of enlightenment, culture, and civilization? It is significant, too, that where Christianity in its original purity most largely prevails, there we have the greatest progress in science, general culture, and ethical achievance. And certainly an earnest desire exists in the Christian church today to carry these advantages and blessings to those peoples of the earth who do not enjoy them.

Even though the forward movement of the race is irregular, halting and much hindered, there is, nevertheless, such a progressive movement; and, if it tells us anything clearly, it points an index finger to that "one far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves." [12]

5. *Reasons for the Cycles.*

Perhaps, after all, if we accept the Christian system, the cycles of alternate progression and retrogression are not

[12] Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, last two lines.

utterly mysterious. What does Biblical history proclaim from the housetop on this subject which seems so inexplicable to the non-Christian mind? It teaches again and again that there are such periodic alternations. But what is always set forth as the condition when nations are progressive and divinely favored? It is that they are upright; that they obey God's holy commandments and serve Him with sincerity of purpose. "Righteousness exalteth a nation" (Prov. 14:34). "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice" (Prov. 29:2). "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; the people whom He hath chosen for His own inheritance" (Ps. 33:12).

On the other hand, what does the Bible always depict as the cause of individual, social, and national degeneration? It is always sin. "Sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34). Trace the history of nations mentioned in the Bible and of those not named there, and see whether the secret of both advancement and decadence is not clearly divulged in Holy Writ. The cycle process is not an inevitable one, due to a perverse fate or built into the very structure of the universe and mankind, but is a foreign disturbing element introduced through the wrong choices of free moral agents.

On the basis of mere naturalism no explanation of the swinging back and forth of human history can be given; hence no philosophy is possible; man is simply left in darkness and despair. The only relief for the tension of the questioning mind lies in faith in such a God as Christianity portrays and proclaims.

6. *The Ultimate Outcome.*

True, there are *lacunae* (dark places) along the course of history even for the Christian philosopher. One of the

most perplexing problems is that of eternal retribution for a portion of the human family. It seems almost impossible to find a *rationale* for such a regimen. Why must it be?

The best that can be said is that the God of the Bible is portrayed as loving, holy, just, and all-wise, and therefore we feel that we can trust Him to do right with all His sentient creatures; that He will save all who ought to be saved; that He will condemn only those who ought to be condemned.

Yet perhaps a few explanatory suggestions may be helpful and relevant. What can God do with people who are finally obstinate, impenitent and rebellious? He cannot force them to repent and believe and still act ethically toward them. Can anyone be coerced into being good in both heart and conduct? Not if his freedom is to be respected.

But more: Could God admit impenitent and unregenerate sinners into heaven? That would soon convert heaven into pandemonium, and make it even worse than this earth.

But, someone suggests, might not God annihilate the finally impenitent? Yes, He might; but then the question would arise, Why did He create them at all? Besides, as far as we know, nothing that has ever been created is ever annihilated. Moreover, annihilation would have no terrors for many wicked people. They would reason that, if they were utterly extinguished, they would know nothing of either joy or sorrow; they would cease from all pain and trouble, because all consciousness would be destroyed. We heard one infidel boast that he "would rather be annihilated than go to the Christian heaven." He added that, if he and his fellows were utterly blotted out, they would fall into "a long sleep, but it would be very sweet."

But for the redeemed and regenerated part of the human

family, history moves on to a glorious and happy goal, and therefore has a sufficient *raison d'etre.* According to Christian teaching, this temporal life is not the end of the individual life and of human history. "There remaineth a rest for the people of God." In this blessed destiny of the regenerate, the natural cosmos will share, for "the creation itself shall also be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. 8:21). Or as St. Peter puts it: "Nevertheless, according to His promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." The ultimate purpose of all human history shall be consummated at the apocalyptic second advent of our Redeemer. Then shall be ushered in that glorious epoch, the Millennium, when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9); "when none shall need to say to another, Know the Lord, for all shall know Him, from the least unto the greatest" (Heb. 8:11).

Thus we are led to conclude that Christianity presents an entirely adequate philosophy of history, provided men are willing to be humble enough to walk partly by faith, and do not insist on walking wholly by sight. Surely the poet was right when he said that throughout all history "one increasing purpose runs." We may learn from William Cowper:

> Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
> But trust Him for His grace;
> Behind a frowning providence
> He hides a smiling face.

James Russell Lowell may also instruct us:

> Nor is he far astray who deems
> That every hope which rises and grows broad
> In the world's heart, by ordered impulse streams
> From the great heart of God.

The same poet sets forth in a virile way the Christian philosophy of history in the well-known lines:

Careless seems the great Avenger: history's pages but record
One death grapple in the darkness 'twixt old systems and the Word;
Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne;
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own.

CHAPTER IX

THE PHILOSOPHY OF REDEMPTION

I. A Unique Element in Christianity.

We have now reached that which is central and unique in the Christian system. Some persons may think that it should have been dealt with first of all, or at least in an earlier chapter; but we believe it will be seen that this is the logical time and place to treat Christian redemption, because all else that has gone before and all that is to come later will thus be made to revolve about this pivotal theme. Thus the centrality of redemption through Christ will be all the more clearly seen and the more highly appreciated.

The Christian religion is predominantly a religion of redemption. This means that God Himself made expiation for the sins of men, and that He did this from the motive of pure, self-immolating love. The race whom He initially created in His own image fell into sin and misery through the wrong use of their freedom; then God, instead of leaving them in their unhappy estate, sent His eternally begotten Son into the world, at infinite sacrifice, to win them back, and to restore them to their original status in happy and holy fellowship with Himself. This mode of reinstating man is known in the Christian system as *The Plan of Redemption.*

It is unique — this Christian method of saving the race. There may, however, be hints and flashes of it in one or two

other religions. For example, Dr. Samuel H. Kellogg, in his useful book,[1] delineates northern Buddhism, in which it is taught that Bodhisat, the ineffable Buddha, will sometime come into the world to save those who trust in him. This seems to be the nearest approach to the Christian doctrine of redemption through the incarnation and mercy of Christ, the Son of God, that we find in any ethnic religion. Indeed, it is thought by some that this feature of northern Buddhism may have been borrowed from Christianity.

But even granting this *rapprochement* to a fundamental principle of Christianity, there is still a wide difference between the two conceptions. Bodhisat will not come into the world to redeem men from sin and make expiation for their transgressions by taking upon himself the penalty due them, but only to help them to bear their burdens and sympathize with them in their distresses. Thus, after all, the idea of a divine Being making redemption through substitution is distinctive of the Christian system. The idea of a self-immolating God is foreign to all religions save the Christian religion.

II. What an Adequate Philosophy Must Do.

Again we must revert to a vital matter previously advanced a number of times in this treatise — namely, that a complete philosophy must be able to account adequately for all phenomena. Christianity as a religion of redemption is an outstanding phenomenon in the world's history and experience. Literally millions of people have not only believed in this religion, but have received from it an inner assurance of its truth and power and gracious influence. A fully rounded system of philosophy must, therefore, try to give an adequate account of the rise, continuance, and

[1] *A Manual of Comparative Religion,* pp. 88, 89.

salutary influence of this wonderful manifestation in the history of the race.

In what way, then, can we account for the fact and power of Christianity? Apparently it had a very feeble beginning. It came from a small and obscure people, the ancient Hebrews. At one time they were slaves in Egypt; then wanderers in the Arabian desert; they had a very checkered history, and in many ways it was far from creditable to them. They were afterwards led into the Babylonian captivity; and even after some of them returned from their exile, they did not keep their freedom for long. In the time of Christ they were a subject people, under the Roman government, having no autonomy of their own. Jesus Himself was born of a humble maiden, lived a humble life, taught His disciples in a humble way, and finally died an ignominious death upon the cross. He never mustered an army, never employed force, never allied Himself with people of wealth or fame, never sought for popularity and worldly power. The early disciples had no prestige. With the exception of Paul and Luke, they were unlearned men, with no academic titles attached to their names.

Surely no movement of history that has gained such an influence for good in the world ever had so feeble a start from the earthly viewpoint, or ever had so little prospect of success. Yet, in the course of a few centuries, it had spread far and wide and had practically captured the Roman empire. This it did, too, in the face of the bitterest and most destructive persecution ever heaped upon innocent people. Not only were its adherents burned at the stake, crucified, thrown to the lions in the amphitheater; but they were often tortured in the most inhuman ways. In spite of it all, Christianity went on its conquering course, until today

it is the most widespread and potent influence for good in the world.

What is the explanation? Suppose Christianity is a delusion or an imposture; how can we account for its influence upon its early adherents? Would they have made the sacrifices they did for something of whose truth they were not assured? Would they have identified themselves with the cause of Christ without making sure that it was founded on truth? Men do not yield in so credulous a way to a delusion or a falsehood. Even a man like Paul cannot be accounted for on the supposition that Christianity is a hallucination; for he was not at all a man of the type who would or could be thus easily deceived. The same may be said of the many men of culture and sanity up to this day whose lives have been transformed by the power of Christ.

What, then, is the only adequate explanation of the rise and influence of the religion of Jesus Christ? Remembering the law of causality — that every effect or event must have an adequate cause — our answer is: The hypothesis that Christianity is true; that Christ was in very truth the divine Son of God; that, having made expiation for sin on the cross, having risen again from the dead, having ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on High, He poured upon the early church the Holy Spirit in Pentecostal power — this hypothesis, and this alone, affords an adequate explanation of the grand effect, the phenomenon of Christianity. That being the only adequate explanation, philosophy is shut up to the acceptance of Christianity as the true religion — unless, indeed, philosophy is only a matter of curious speculation instead of an earnest quest for truth.

Then, too, it has been full-toned Christianity, not a pared-down recension of it, that has exerted this marvelous influence upon the world. Heresies galore have arisen from

time to time, but they have been condemned as insufficient and inefficient, and have run their course; while true and vital Christianity has always been like a living stream flowing on through history with refreshing and purifying power. Today, when it is given the right of way, it is as cogent as ever. If Christianity is true, its influence is adequately accounted for; otherwise no sufficient explanation can be found.

The several unique features and factors that constitute Christianity a religion of redemption must now be examined and analyzed, in order that we may determine their *rationale;* for that is what a philosophy demands. Among the outstanding peculiarities of the Christian system is the doctrine of the Trinity, which we must now consider.

III. The Doctrine of the Triune God.

1. *A Unique Doctrine.*

No other religion contains the doctrine of one God in three persons. Mohammedanism upholds the doctrine of monotheism, which is correct, but vehemently rejects the tri-personality of God, calling it *blasphemy.*[2] Pantheism merges God and the universe into one substance, and denies any kind of personality to God. Polytheism multiplies the gods, and knows nothing of true monotheism. It is true, in Hinduism there is what may be called an adumbration of the Trinity in the three names of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva; but these really constitute a triad, not a trinity in the Christian sense of three persons in one Godhead.

2. *A Necessary Postulate of Redemption.*

It may be asked, Why must God be tripersonal? In a true religion, as well as a true philosophy, there must be a

[2] The Islamic term for blasphemy is *Shirk.*

rational basis for every doctrine, because the truth demands that this universe of ours shall be a rational one. Were it irrational, it would be a chaos instead of a cosmos. We must, therefore, inquire for the *raison d'etre* of the Trinity.

It lies in the very fact that Christianity is a religion of redemption. If man is to be redeemed; that is, if a divine person is to come into the world, empty Himself, humble Himself, appear "in fashion as a man" (Phil. 2:8), put Himself in man's place, and take upon Himself the moral task that man, being a sinner, could not himself perform — in order to accomplish this great achievement, there must be three persons in the Godhead; for only so could one divine person empty Himself and refrain from the exercise of His divine power, and still leave the throne of the universe occupied by its Sovereign. Thus two remaining persons of the Godhead would uphold the cosmos, and at the same time sustain the divine person who had humbled Himself by putting Himself within the limits of time and space and enshrining Himself in finite human nature. Had there been but one person in the Godhead (and here person means the Ego), He could not, even for a moment, have relinquished His rule over the universe to redeem sinful man. ! It was the person (the Ego) of the Son, not the divine nature, nor the Father nor the Holy Spirit, who voluntarily and out of condescending love immolated Himself and placed Himself under temporal and spatial limitations. This He did, of course, only for the time being; and then, having accomplished redemption for the race, He resumed His rightful place of pristine majesty and sovereign power and glory, even as, while He was still in the state of humiliation, He prayed to the Father: "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:5).

Paul teaches the same doctrine. "Wherefore God hath also highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God, the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11).

Thus it has been shown that a God of trinal personality is a necessary postulate for a religion of redemptive love and grace.

3. *The Rational Basis of the Doctrine of the Trinity.*

Of course, there are those who will cry out against "rationalizing about the Trinity." They aver that they want to accept the doctrine "by simple faith." That is, they are satisfied with a naive faith, and scorn what is known as discursive faith, and think everybody else should accept their simple way of believing.

We, too, believe in faith. Where it must needs be, we should "walk by faith," and should not demand to "walk by sight." Moreover, not for a moment would we think of placing reason above faith or above the Bible or in opposition to them. That would be rationalism, and the author of this treatise is anything but a rationalist.

However, reason is also a faculty of the human soul; indeed, it is as much a God-given faculty as is faith. So it ought to have its place in the actions of the mind. It should not be pitted against faith, for that would create a schism in the human soul, and would thus destroy man's trust and peace. But when through faith the soul has been spiritually regenerated and enlightened, the reason, which, of course, shares in the said operations of grace, can often show that a Biblically revealed doctrine is in accord with its — that is,

reason's — highest processes. So it will not be in vain to see whether the doctrine of the Trinity, so clearly revealed in Holy Writ, has a rational basis.

In speaking of the three persons of the Holy Trinity we mean three centers, or *foci,* of self-consciousness; in other words, we mean three Egos; for the Ego is the core of personality. It is the Self, the entity by which we say "I," the Ihood. Each human being has a single Ego. He says "I," using the first person singular; he never speaks of himself as "We." It is worth repeating that, in his nature or substance, the human individual is in possession of a single Ego — a single center of self-consciousness.

Now, if we can in a manner visualize a being with a single Ego, it is not difficult to visualize a Supreme Being who is so rich in His absolute, infinite and eternal nature and substance as to be in possession of three Egos, or self-conscious centers, each of whom is able to say "I." Yet all three Egos inhere in, fully possess, and function in and through the entire divine nature or Godhead. If there is anything irrational about such a conception, we fail to see wherein it lies. Surely a being who has three such psychical *foci* would be richer in self-consciousness than a being who is possessed of only one. Perhaps the fact that we human personalities can use only the singular number in describing our psychical being is one mark of our finiteness, and marks, in part, the distinction between us and the infinite and absolute God.

There can be no doubt of the Biblical teaching on this doctrine, namely, that each person of the Trinity has a distinct Ihood or center of self-consciousness. The Father addresses the Son; the Son addresses the Father; the Son speaks of the Holy Spirit as a person, applying to Him the personal pronouns and ascribing to Him personal qualities

and activities. For example, note the following: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17). Here the Father as a person speaks of the Son as a person. Jesus said: "Father, glorify thy name." Then a voice from heaven replied: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again" (John 12:28). Here we have recorded a conversation between two distinct persons. Note how Jesus spoke of the Holy Spirit: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify me, for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you" (John 16:12-14). Other like texts might be cited (John 14:17-19; 15:26; 16:7-11).

These are only a few of the many Biblical proofs of the recognition of three distinct self-conscious persons in the Godhead. Yet the Bible is no less positive in teaching that there is only one God. Even Jesus Himself, while claiming to be one with the Father (John 14:9, 10; 10:15, 30; 5:23, 26), declared: "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," etc. (Mark 12:29, 30; cf. Deut. 6:4, 5).

By these tokens we conclude that God is one in one respect and three in another respect: one in substance and Godhood; three in centers of self-consciousness, persons, or Egos. And since He is not one and three in the same respect, but in different respects, there is no contradiction in holding that He is both one and three.

4. *A Psychological Illustration.*

Since God is a Mind or Spirit, not a material being, per-

haps our best illustration of His triune character is to be found in the constitution of the human mind. We are self-conscious beings. Surely no one will deny so universal a phenomenon, and a fact so absolutely necessary to our very existence as personalities. While we are dowered with only one Ego, there is a threefold process by which we come to self-consciousness. Let us analyze it: first, you are you as subject; second, you can make yourself your object, because you can think of and cognize yourself; third, you can cognize your subjective self and your objective self as one and the same self. Thus there are three distinct acts involved; and only when you reach the third act is the circle of self-consciousness complete. In order to impress the idea upon our memories, let us put it in a somewhat epigrammatic form: Our total selfhood is made up of the subjective self, the objective self, and the percipient self.

Now, it should be borne in mind that this method of reasoning gives us only an illustration, not an analogy; for, after all, man is uni-personal, not tri-personal; but this threefold process by which he achieves the state of self-consciousness may be a gleam or *indicium* pointing to the fact that he was originally created in the divine similitude. In this way light is thrown upon an otherwise mysterious statement of the Bible: "And God[3] said, Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness"; and yet in the next verse we read: "And God created man in *His* own image; in the image of God created *He* him."[4] We have italicized the words that are apropos

[3] Hebrew, *Elohim,* which is plural; however, the verb "said" is singular. Here are marks of both plurality and unity in the Godhead.

[4] Gen. 1:27; here again *Elohim* is used with a singular verb, "created" (Heb. *bara*), and, in addition, with the singular pronoun "His." May not these passages be Old Testament anticipations of the New Testament revelation of the Trinity?

to the point at issue. Certainly these singulars and plurals, used together in this way, seem to point to both a divine unity and a divine plurality. The doctrine of the Trinity, as it has been formulated in the creeds and theologies by a collation and correlation of all relevant Biblical passages, makes a true and consistent synthesis.

Now, our conclusion is that, since God is tri-personal in His being, one person could descend into the realm of time and space and place Himself temporarily under human limitations, while at the same time the throne of the universe was still occupied by its omnipotent Sovereign; for the Son in His incarnation did not go beyond His Father's care, but was, indeed, upheld by Him in His self-abnegating and redeeming work. God, who is transcendent in His relation to time and space, must also be immanent therein.

IV. The Incarnation of the Son of God.

1. *Its Possibility.*

It is not impossible or unreasonable to believe that the divine Ego of the Son of God was capable of infinite condescension and self-immolation, and so could have permitted Himself to be enfolded, ensphered, or enshrined in human nature by the action of the Holy Spirit, so that He (that is, His Ego or Person) would then function in and through the assumed human nature. Is that any more mysterious than that your Ego and mine are thus enfolded in our human nature and function in and through it? Surely not. If the self-consciousness of the divine Son of God was thus enwrapped, that would constitute a real divine incarnation, fulfilling the sublime saying, "And the Word (*Logos*) became flesh (human), and tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory" (John 1:14).

2. *Its Congruity.*

The unity of Biblical teaching makes a strong apologetic for its divine inspiration. It is highly improbable that a book written by so many different authors, living in many different countries, and separated from one another by many centuries, would be harmonious on all fundamental matters. Human philosophies do not accord so perfectly. Indeed, there are almost as many systems of human philosophy as there are different philosophers.

Let us see how this introductory statement applies to the matter now in hand: the incarnation of the Son of God. The Scriptures teach clearly that man was originally created in the divine image. No other creature of God was thus formed and created. Nothing is said of inorganic substance, or of vegetable forms or animals having been made after the divine similitude. Only of man, a self-conscious, sentient, rational, moral, and spiritual being, is that statement made.

It follows, therefore, that, since human nature was originally constituted in the divine image, it was perfectly congruous for the divine person (Ego) of the Son of God to assume, and identify Himself with, human nature, in order to be able to take man's place under the law of eternal justice. Thus redemption was anticipated in the creation of man in the divine likeness. All the ways of God are beautifully rational. As human nature was originally created and constituted, no schism or antagonism existed between it and the divine nature.

3. *The Mode of the Divine Incarnation.*

According to the clear teaching of the Holy Scriptures, the mode of the incarnation of the Son of God was by the Holy Ghost through the medium of the Virgin Mary. The

narratives given by Matthew and Luke (Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-56) of the miraculous conception and virgin birth of Jesus, have as good textual attestation and authority as any other portion of these two gospels, or any other parts of the New Testament. There is not a leading New Testament manuscript or codex from which they are omitted. Therefore, it would be only in the interest of a subjective prejudice or opinion that they could be looked upon as later interpolations.

We need not enter into a lengthy discussion of the virgin birth of our Lord. That has been amply done by many evangelical writers.[5] Our purpose here will be to indicate its rational and philosophical basis.

No difficulty ought to be felt in believing that the Holy Spirit could take of the seminal substance of the Virgin Mary, and enshrine within it the Ego of the Second Person of the Trinity. That would be no more mysterious than is the well-known fact that a new Ego is begotten or created in natural human generation, and enfolded, as it were, in human nature, both psychical and somatic. The only difference is: in the incarnation of the Son of God the divine Ego was ensphered in human nature, and functioned in it; in the other case it is a human and finite Ego that is thus constituted and empowered.

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[5] James Orr, *The Virgin Birth of Christ.* Although written in 1907, Dr. Orr's work still remains a classic. Cf. also R. J. Knowling, *Our Lord's Virgin Birth and the Criticism of Today;* L. M. Sweet, *The Birth and Infancy of Jesus Christ;* L. S. Keyser, *The Rational Test,* chap. VI; J. B. Champion, *The Virgin's Son;* W. Evans, *Why I Believe in the Virgin Birth;* R. J. Cooke, *Did Paul Know of the Virgin Birth?;* F. W. Pitt, *New Light on the Virgin Birth;* R. D. Wilson, "The Meaning of 'Alma,'" in *The Princeton Theological Review,* April, 1926; W. H. Guiton, "The Virgin Birth of our Lord," in *The Princeton Theological Review,* July, 1927.

During the period of our Lord's humiliation (*kenosis*) (Phil. 2:7: Greek verb, *ekenosen*), He voluntarily refrained from the exercise of His divine attributes, and veiled His divine glory in human form, and took unto Him a human nature. Only in cases in which the Father willed it did Christ exercise and display His divine prerogatives, as when He performed miracles, showed supernatural wisdom, and was transfigured before His disciples. While this fact may seem to be mysterious, it certainly is not irrational to believe that a good and holy God would treat His rational and sentient creatures in this beneficent way.

The exposition of the doctrine thus given has not been derived from human wisdom, but has been formulated by an examination of the relevant teachings of God's Word. Let us observe: "In the beginning was the Word (*Logos*), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1: 1, 14). In this remarkable passage the personal distinction between the Son and the Father is plainly indicated ("with God"), and yet their unity in the substance of the Godhead ("was God") is just as clearly set forth. This involves the trinity in unity. Then, it must be observed that it was not the Father, but the *Logos* (the Son) who "became flesh." No other doctrine than that of the real incarnation of the Son of God can be derived from these Johannine statements. As far as we can see psychologically and biologically, such an incarnation of the divine Son could have taken place only by means of a miraculous conception and a virgin birth.

The angel of the annunciation said to Joseph, in informing him of the condition of his betrothed, the Virgin Mary, that the child who was to be born of her should be called "Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matt.

1:23). Here again is taught the doctrine of a divine Person incarnated in human form.[6]

That the Son of God experienced a real incarnation is made specific in many passages of Scripture. We read, for example, of Jesus: "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him." Almost the same is said of the growth of John the Baptist in his youth. Again we read of Jesus: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." These passages prove that the divine person of the Son of God was truly and really incarnated and was having truly human experiences. During his sojourn on earth in the state of humiliation He declared that His words and wisdom did not come from Himself, but He spoke only the things which His Father bade Him. This is frequently repeated. Only after His resurrection did He assert that all authority in heaven and on earth was His. This authority was fully restored to Him when He ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on High.

Now, all this connotes and necessitates the miraculous conception of Christ in the seminal being of the Virgin Mary. If this supernatural and gracious act was performed, a real incarnation of the divine Son of God occurred. Otherwise no incarnation of a divine person could have taken place; for if Jesus had been naturally procreated, He would have been a human person — that is, a human Ego would have been brought into existence. Is it not evident that in that case He would have been only a human person, not a divine person in human form? Then Jesus would

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[6] Immanuel equals *Immanu,* with us, and *El, Elohim, God* — that is, Elohim with us. *Elohim* is the Old Testament name of God, the Creator: "In the beginning *Elohim* created the heavens and the earth."

not have been "the Word become flesh" (human); then He would not have been "Immanuel, God with us." If with this human person the Son of God had united Himself, one of two alternatives would have to be chosen; either the union was only a mystical union,[7] such as regenerated persons have with Christ, in which case there would have been no divine incarnation; or else our Lord would have been two persons; would have had two centers of self-consciousness; and that would have been an anomaly. Besides, Christ never displayed the least consciousness of a dual personality, or self-consciousness. In speaking of Himself, He always used the pronouns of the first person singular. His disciples always addressed Him in the singular number; and afterward they always spoke or wrote of Him in the same way. If Christ was really virgin born, as the Holy Scriptures teach, He was truly the God-man, the divine-human Saviour of the world, and thus He is "able to save unto the uttermost those that come unto God by Him."

There is always a divine rationality in the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. They always give the whole truth, the all-sided view; hence they uphold a true philosophy. If Jesus was conceived and born as the Bible teaches, His marvelous work and influence are adequately accounted for — and that is, as has been shown, a fundamental element of philosophy.

Our subject is of such vital importance that it must be continued in another chapter.

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[7] In theological phrase, *unio mystica.*

CHAPTER X

THE PHILOSOPHY OF REDEMPTION
(Continued)

IV. The Incarnation of the Son of God (continued).

4. *The Rationale of the Incarnation.*

The inquiring mind naturally asks for the *why* of the incarnation. Why could the race be saved only by means of the incarnation and sacrifice of the Son of God? Is not that a somewhat roundabout way — the way of circumlocution? Could not the objective have been achieved in a more direct way? Why could not God simply forgive and save mankind by a divine fiat and a simple act of divine power?

Well, Christian believers ought to be able to answer these questions in a way that will satisfy the honest doubter, although, of course, they cannot satisfy the captious one. We Christians ought to obey the apostle's injunction: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give answer to him that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear: having a good conscience," etc. (1 Pet. 3:15, 16). Let us classify in order the reasons for the incarnation of the Son of God.

(1) *The Divine Source and Motive Power of Redemption.*

The divine determination to save the sinning race sprang from God's paternal love. It was wholly motivated by love. It was not devised primarily for any other reason than that

God loved and pitied the fallen and unhappy race. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son"; "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins"; "Who loved me, and gave Himself for me." So let us understand that holy love was the moving principle of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in devising, decreeing, and carrying out the plan of redeeming grace through Jesus Christ.

(2) *The Divine Justice Involved.*

However, the problem of divine redemption was not so easy and simple as some superficial thinkers suppose. The principle of justice, which is an eternal ethical principle, just as is love, had also to be reckoned with. A moral government was established, and that involved principles of righteousness which were inherent in the system. God could not forgive men their transgressions by a mere fiat, nor could He with His omnipotent hand, wave aside the moral government of the world — that is, the eternal principle of justice. The sinner had to be punished if the law of holiness was to be upheld.

But if justice were visited upon the sinner, it would forever prevent him from being saved. And that touched the compassionate and merciful heart of God. "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked may turn from his wicked way and live: turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezek. 33:11).

The question then was, How were mercy and truth, righteousness and love, to meet and embrace each other — that is, How were they to be harmonized, and thus prevent a clash among the divine attributes and a schism in the being of God and the government of the universe? It could be done

only by finding a Substitute for the sinning race — a Substitute who would be equal to the exigency, and who, at the same time, could suffer justly in the place of the unjust.

There was only one Being who could accomplish this great and beneficent objective: the eternal Son of God, infinite in His attributes, the source of the divine law, the sovereign Ruler, who by infinite self-sacrifice and love could become human, by being born of a woman, born under the law, and could suffer the penalty of human transgression as human beings would have to suffer, and thus secure for men the adoption of sons (cf. Gal. 4:4). The same profound principle is set forth in this text: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit" (Rom. 8:3, 4). This Pauline saying has abysmal depths in it. We may not be able to comprehend all of its meaning; but it certainly means that the sacrifice of Christ upheld the holy law of God, and at the same time made it ethically possible for sinners to be pardoned and restored to the divine favor and fellowship through divine love.

The so-called "moral influence theory" of the atonement, advocated by Abelard, Bushnell, W. N. Clarke, and others of that school, is not truly moral, because it entirely ignores the claims of an eternal moral principle, namely, that of justice, and makes God a God of sentimental love instead of what He truly is, a God of holy love; a God who loves the sinner, and yet is too holy to look upon sin with any degree of allowance.

Thus the plan of redemption through the incarnation and expiatory sufferings of the Son of God means that divine

love is satisfied in the salvation of believing and penitent sinners, while, by the same token, God's justice and government are upheld and vindicated. Men know, therefore, that they cannot sin against God's holy law with impunity; and yet, if they will repent of their sins, and accept Christ as their atoning Saviour, they will be pardoned and saved with an abundant and joyful salvation. It is difficult to understand or conceive how else this glorious synthesis of saving mercy and holy justice could have been achieved. Thus there is a divine *rationale* in the plan of redemption through divine incarnation and atonement.[1] Divine love moved God to determine to save man, the sinner; divine justice determined the *method* to be employed to accomplish the gracious result. By this gracious adjustment God could "be just, and the justifier of him that believeth on Jesus."

(3) *A Vital Union of Divinity and Humanity.*

The incarnation of the Son of God established a real and living union between God and man. Let us see how this conjunction was effected. Granted for the time being that the Biblical narrative of man's creation and fall is true, its rationality can be shown in the following way:

When man sinned in the Garden of Eden, he fell from God. Of course, it was a moral and spiritual fall; and he fell far and hard. This fall caused a separation between God and man, or between divinity and humanity. Now man, having disabled himself by sin, could not lift himself up to God again, any more than you or I could lift ourselves bodily into the air by taking hold of the tops of our shoes.

[1] The word "atonement" no longer means merely "at-onement," as some Modernists hold. That meaning is obsolete. The word, as now used, conveys the idea of reparation for a wrong done. See *Webster's New International Dictionary.*

But if man could not lift himself up to God, God could come down to man. This is true because, as we have seen, God is a gracious and condescending Father.

And that is precisely what God did in the incarnation. In the person of the eternal Son, He came down into the realm of time and space, and united His divine nature with our human nature in a personal conjunction, making what might be called a real and organic union. Now if we, by regeneration and faith, are united with Christ, the God-man, our humanity and His divinity are re-united in a real, living and joy-giving way. There is nothing mechanical about this union of humanity and deity. It is a real and living fellowship. It accords with our Lord's saying: "I am the vine; ye are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing."

Is any other way of re-uniting humanity and divinity conceivable? Had it not been for the incarnation of the Son of God, man would have forever remained "alienated from the life of God" (Eph. 4:18). The hypostatic (personal) union of the divine and human natures in Christ is the ground and producing cause of the mystical union between sinful man and the holy God.

(4) *The Concrete Explains the Abstract.*

Another vital reason why "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" is this: We can much more readily understand the concrete than the abstract, the finite than the infinite, the contingent than the absolute. This is one of the fundamental principles of true pedagogy. From the kindergarten to the college and university we employ the teaching method of passing from the known to the unknown, from the concrete to the abstract, from the plain and simple

to the more profound and complex. Even in the theological classroom, with the highest grade of students, the instructor often goes to the blackboard and draws some simple lines and figures, to illustrate a profound truth that would otherwise be incomprehensible to the learner.

Now, if that is the normal method of teaching, it is probable that God, our Heavenly Father, would have known it, and would have used it. We shall see how simple and condescending were His dealings with His finite creatures.

We read in the Scriptures that God is a Spirit. Some of our textbooks define God in this way: "God is a spirit, uncreated and perfect." But can any of us obtain a clear notion of an absolute and infinite spiritual Personality? You think and think, but you can go only so far, and then your thought vanishes off into obscurity.

But who cannot obtain a clear conception of Jesus? No special effort of the imagination is required to visualize Him as a little babe, lying in Bethlehem's manger. How clearly we can see Him as a child playing in Joseph's carpenter shop in Nazareth! How distinctly we can see Him as a youth of twelve in the temple conversing with the doctors of the law! How easily we can picture Him going up and down the land, doing good to every one whom He met; comforting the afflicted, healing the sick, opening the eyes of the blind, raising the dead, blessing the little children! We can see Him in Gethsemane's garden, lying prone upon the ground, and praying, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass: nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done"; while the drops of bloody sweat break from the pores of His pure, white brow. We can see Him standing in Pilate's hall of judgment, as His malignant enemies smite Him on the cheek, spit upon Him, crown Him with thorns, and cry, "Crucify Him! crucify Him!" No less clearly do we see

Him toiling up *via dolorosa,* bearing His cross upon His shoulders, and breaking down beneath its weight. Lastly before our riveted gaze stands the vivid picture of His suffering on the cross; and if we are quiet and reverent, we may almost hear Him saying, as He lifts His eyes heavenward, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" It is all simple and clear to us.

Who, then, was Jesus Christ? He was God made simple and plain to our apprehension. Who was Jesus Christ? He was God come down out of the abstract realm into the realm of the concrete, so that we could better understand Him. He was God come down out of the sphere of eternity and infinity into the realm of time and space where we mortals dwell, in order that we might apprehend Him as our God and Redeemer and Friend. Yes, God becomes primer-plain to us in the person and sacrifice of Jesus the incarnate Son. We might almost say that Christ is the A B C of God to us.

Observe that the Scriptures teach this doctrine explicitly: "No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, who is in the most intimate relation with the Father, He hath revealed Him" (John 1:18; a free, but correct, translation). Jesus also said: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and, how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" Yes, we behold "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6).

We see, therefore, how rationally and graciously God acted toward finite and sin-stricken men in sending His only-begotten Son into the world. Is not the Christian system a divine philosophy?

(5) *The Divine Glory Veiled.*

Another fundamental reason for the divine revelation by

means of an incarnation lies in this patent fact, that men could not have stood before and endured an unveiled theophany. Had the Son of God appeared on the earth in all His divine glory and majesty, men could not have borne the manifestation. "No man can see God and live."

There are two instances in Christ's life, even in His state of humiliation, in which a display of His divine glory and power overcame those with whom He was associated. When, on the Mount of Transfiguration, He permitted His divinity to shine forth, causing His face and even His clothing to gleam with supernal radiance, His three witnessing disciples fell in a swoon before Him. They could not look upon His glory.

Again, after He had come out of His bitter trial in Gethsemane, the officers of the law, led by Judas, the betrayer, came forth to arrest Him. We may believe that they were strong, brave and brawny men, much like our modern policemen. They had come armed with swords and staves to apprehend Him. Yet Christ gave them one look, allowing His divine power to flash from His eye, when they fell to the ground as dead men before Him, and were unable to stand up until He withdrew His power and bade them arise and go about their work of arraigning Him (John 18:6, 7).

These incidents prove that no man could have stood in the presence of an unveiled theophany. It would have been more fatal than for a person to look for five minutes into the face of the noonday sun shining from an unclouded sky.

Therefore, if God desired to make a clear revelation of Himself to men, set them an example of true living, teach them the way of salvation by the normal method, and give them an opportunity to exercise their freedom by accepting His redemptive work, no other way of doing these things

can be conceived than the way set forth in the New Testament: namely, by the Son of God coming into the world, and veiling His divine glory in human form. Certainly this seems to be a most reasonable and gracious way, making the method of salvation truly ethical and spiritual.

(6) *The Value of an Example.*

One might put it in the form of an epigram: "An ounce of example is worth a pound of precept." Would not our Heavenly Father know so simple a truth? Had He done nothing but issue mandates and precepts from His throne, men might well have replied: "These commandments are true and good, but we need someone to set us an example of right living according to the divine rule." In reply God made answer, as it were: "Yes, my weak and sinful people need someone to show them how to live; therefore, my well-beloved Son will identify Himself with their life by taking upon Him their very nature, will tabernacle with them, pass through all their human experiences, and thus show them how to live in the midst of a world of mingled joy, sorrow, and temptation.

And that is precisely what Jesus did. He placed Himself under the law; He became truly human; He assumed a truly human consciousness, and thus was able to become a model of true human living. He Himself said: "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:15). Says Paul: "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded after the example of Christ Jesus" (Rom. 15:5, margin). Listen also to Peter: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps" (1 Pet. 2:21). The verses that follow indicate the ways in which men should follow the pattern placed be-

fore them by Christ. When Paul exhorted Christians thus, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5), he was teaching the same truth, that Jesus had lived the ideal life before men in a world of temptation and affliction.

Could God have set men an example of right human living in this world in any other way than by means of the incarnation of His eternal Son? We can conceive of no other way — the way set forth in the Bible, and found nowhere else. Such a conception is above mere human intellection and discovery.

(7) *Man's Need of Sympathy.*

The doctrine of the incarnation of the Son of God fits into all human need, and especially men's need of sympathy in sorrow and temptation. Had the Son of God remained in His state of glory; had He refrained from visiting men in their unhappy estate, and identifying Himself with them, they never could feel that He really entered into sympathy with all their joys and sorrows. But He came into the very life of men. He passed through the whole gamut of their experiences from infancy to maturity. Thus we know that, by His own experience, He is able to condole with us in our trials. We can always say, "He has passed this way!" He did far more than merely *profess* to pity us by saying, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him" (Ps. 103:13); He demonstrated His sympathy by actually taking up our life into His own life, and living our life here on earth with us.

The inspired writer declares this truth in an effective way: "For we have not a High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

Thus Jesus becomes our companion in joy and grief. We may "walk with Him and talk with Him." There may be a close feeling of *cameraderie* between Him and us. It affords the believer much comfort to be able to say, "He knows." In this respect we can see the fullness of the salvation He came to give us. If we know that He sympathizes with us because He knows our estate, then we may also feel assured that He is *willing* to help and save us. But one might be willing to help another, and yet might not be able to do so. Therefore Christ must also be Divine, so that we may know that He is *able* to help and save us. A *willing* and *competent* Saviour meets all needs.

Here again we see the full-toned character of the Christian system. It surely is a divine philosophy. Jesus' words are pertinent here: "I come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). The apostle is in accord with his Master's teaching, for he says that Christ "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Eph. 3:20).

(8) *The Appeal of Unselfish Sacrifice.*

Few things affect the human heart more strongly than a story of unselfish sacrifice. If people are ever melted to tears, it is when such an incident is touchingly narrated. Reflect on a mother's self-immolating love. Hard indeed must be the heart that is not made tender by it.

Now, God would surely know how best to appeal to the human heart. One might, without irreverence, go as far as to imagine God's saying to Himself: "I know what will touch and melt the hearts of my people more than anything else. It will be an act of unselfish and self-sacrificing love. Therefore, I will send my well-beloved Son into the world,

and He will take upon Himself their burdens and sorrows, and suffer in their stead the penalty of their transgressions. That will appeal to them."

And that is precisely what Christ did for us in His incarnation, His life of humiliation, His substitutionary sufferings in Gethsemane and on Calvary. If this is true — and surely it is the teaching of the Bible — it ought to touch men's hearts. If there is anything explicit, it is that Holy Writ sets forth God as a God who sacrificed Himself in the death of His Son. The Son certainly came to the world with a beneficent purpose. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:16, 17). Why should not men respond to such a manifestation of sacrificial love?

Well, many of them do respond. No doubt, "the old, old story of Jesus and His love" has won more people from lives of sin to lives of purity and trust than any other force in the world. God sometimes threatens, and it is right that a just God should do so; but the minatory parts of the Holy Scriptures have not won as many people to God as have the passages reciting the self-sacrificing love of Christ. It is a most winsome exhibition of love.

But let it be borne in mind that the sacrifice of our Lord must have been a *real* sacrifice. No merely spectacular display would impress people's hearts. Rather, they would be revolted by such an affected histrionic act. But if Christ really suffered the punishment that was due us men, and thus saved us from the condign consequences of our sins, then indeed should our hearts be melted with gratitude, and we should gladly accept the propitiation He effected for us. Yes, it ought also to melt our hearts with contrition on ac-

count of our sins. The apostle's question is certainly apropos here: "Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" (Rom. 2:4).

There can be no doubt of the Biblical teaching regarding the substitutional character of Christ's suffering. If the Bible does not teach this doctrine, language can make nothing plain. Christ said that He would "give His life a ransom for many"; that He would "shed His blood for the remission of sins." The apostle says that Christ "tasted death for every man"; that "in due time Christ died for the ungodly." Another apostle says that "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." Again: "God sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Another apostle bears the same high testimony: "For Christ also hath suffered once for our sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the Spirit." The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is regarded by all evangelical believers as a messianic prophecy. It has been called "a prophetic biography of Christ." Let us read two of its affecting verses: "But He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." Peter repeats the latter part of this verse. Again the prophet: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

Thus the Holy Scriptures teach explicitly that Christ was our Substitute; that He really suffered for us and in our place; it was a true, equivalent sacrifice for the transgressions of the whole world. And that, let it be said, is precisely what mankind needs, a real vicarious sacrifice on the

part of God, to touch and melt their hearts, bring them to repentance, stir confidence in them, and lift them up to a life of holy love and gratitude. We are persuaded that this exhibition of true, self-abnegating love has won more people to accept the Christian religion and its benefits than anything else. Hence we have once more shown that Christianity assigns an adequate cause for the grand effect.

(9) *All Humanity Potentially Involved in Christ's Person.* What did the Son of God assume in the incarnation? The answer is, He assumed *all humanity potentially.* Again and again He called Himself "the Son of *man,*" never the "Son of *a* man." Hence the meaning is that He was the Son of humanity. In these days of biological study and the exposition of the doctrine of genetic origins and relations, no one should fail to understand what is meant by our saying that, in the human nature which the Son of God assumed, all our humanity was seminally or genetically involved and incorporated. Begotten by the Holy Spirit from the seminal substance of the Virgin Mary, our Lord's humanity was drawn from the whole course of the human race from the first generic human being created by the Almighty in His own image. Thus Christ was the Universal Man. He had something of every member of the race in Him.

This principle might be illustrated in this way: Suppose you were holding in your hand the first acorn, with its living germ-plasm, that God ever made, and you were to say, "I am holding in my hand all the oak forests that shall ever grow upon the earth," would you not be telling the truth? For potentially all the subsequent trees of that genus must have been enfolded in the original germ-plasm. So Christ in the embryonic sense took into His Godhead all our humanity. Thus all of us may have a vital relation to Him,

just as He said, "I am the vine; ye are the branches," and also: "I in you and ye in me"; or as Paul phrased it: "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Let us now see how this genetic view of our Lord's humanity explains His expiatory work in our behalf. When He was crucified on the cross, it was potentially all our humanity which hung there, just as the Scripture says: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that He, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9). You see, it was the divine Person of the Son of God, suffering in and through our human nature, who made atonement for the sins of the world, so that He could suffer as man, and yet that at the same time, His Deity could give infinite value to His vicarious suffering, and thus make it effectual for the whole race of mankind. For the Word of God teaches this doctrine in most excellent language: "And Jehovah hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6). Also: "And He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2). Yes, the atoning grace and power of the incarnate Son of God equate the sins of the whole race of mankind. They furnish a perfect *quid pro quo* — a complete equivalent.

(10) *The Sinning Species Punished.*

Surely it is consistent and generic that the same species of being that committed the transgression should bear the penalty of the transgression. But if this law had been enforced upon the individuals of the human race, no one could have been saved. Yet God in His love and pity desired to save mankind and each individual personality thereof. He "is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should

perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).

Then how could the same species that sinned suffer the consequences of sin? If the race was to be pardoned and saved, there was no other organic and logical way than the way depicted in Holy Scripture, namely, that the infinite Son of God should take upon Himself human nature, endue it with infinite value, and endure our penal sufferings in our stead. Here again is an adequate doctrine of the vicarious atonement wrought by Christ for the whole human family, and is therefore the only adequate explanation of the grand effect — the rise, progress, and saving power of the gospel of the incarnation. Another proof, this, that Christianity is an adequate philosophy.

All that has been said under the subhead of the Incarnation has already verified the Christian doctrine of the atonement, so that it will not be necessary to give further proof of its rationality and adequacy. But one more reason for the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us must needs be adduced, leading us to the next division of our theme.

(11) *The New Federal Head.*

To deal with our subject in a vital and logical way we must recognize the necessity of constituting a new Federal Head of the human race, if its members are to be saved from the just condemnation due their sins. Its first federal head, Adam, the original generic and genetic man, failed by his fall into sin. Thus he led the race astray; for "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin"; "By the offense of one judgment came upon all men unto condemnation"; "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners" (Rom. 5:12, 18, 19).

Now, if we follow the old sinful federal head, we shall

be led downward to death and destruction. If, on the other hand, we by repentance are detached from the old federal head, and by regeneration and faith are attached to the New Federal Head, He, the Captain of our salvation, will lead us on to eternal victory and glory.

Is not that the only organic and logical way by which the human race could have been redeemed from sin and restored to favor with a good and holy God? Is not the Christian system, therefore, a philosophy? Does it not adequately explain the most salutary and uplifting phenomenon in the world, namely, the experience of salvation through the atonement wrought by Jesus Christ, the true God-man?

After all, spiritual values are the highest and noblest values which men are cognizant. If there are values that are eternal, they are the spiritual values. Christianity is the one religion and philosophy in the world which adequately explains, upholds, and conserves these values, and appraises them as of sufficient worth to be continued forever and ever. "For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:18).

CHAPTER XI

THE PHILOSOPHY OF A SPECIAL REVELATION

I. The Biblical Teaching.

It is evident that the Biblical writers profess in many places to record special divine revelations. Where such manifestations of the divine will are not expressly declared, they are usually implied. Such expressions as, "God spake," "God said," "God appeared," "The Word of the Lord came," are said to occur over two thousand times in the Bible. The supernatural element certainly comes very much to the fore in Christianity's Book.

Let us note some of the recorded incidents and statements. To our first parents, according to the Bible, God gave special instructions on subjects which they could not otherwise have known. He told them to "be fruitful and multiply, and complete and subdue the earth"; to have dominion over nature's realm; to eat of the fruit of the garden; to refrain from eating of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" on penalty of death for their disobedience. All this was knowledge which they needed, and which had to be supernaturally revealed to them.

Afterward God appeared to Noah, instructing him to prepare the ark, and telling him about the coming destruction of the people of the earth by a flood. So He came to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Samuel,

David, Solomon, and many others, and gave all of them some special revelation of His will that they could not otherwise have gained. In Christ God came especially to reveal His love, grace, and desire for the salvation of the human family. The Book of Revelation professes to be a series of special disclosures regarding things that are to come.

Some express Biblical texts on this doctrine may be cited: "The secret things belong to the Lord our God; but those things that are revealed belong unto us and our children forever" (Deut. 29:29); "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16; the Greek word is *theopneustos,* God-breathed); "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds" (Heb. 1:1, 2); "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation; for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of old spake, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:20, 21). The expression, "No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation," may be literally translated, "No prophecy of the Scripture is of its *own unloosing.*" This means that it did not come spontaneously or from a human source, but came directly from God.

There can be no doubt, therefore, that the Biblical writers often put forth the claim that they were recording special divine revelations. The question thus arises, Does this Biblical claim have a rational and philosophical basis? Ought God to have made a special revelation? If so, can the Bible rightly claim to be the record of that revelation? If possible, these questions should be adequately answered.

II. Man's Need of a Special Revelation.

The English Deists of the eighteenth century and of the first half of the nineteenth century contended that there was no need of a special divine revelation; that God had revealed Himself sufficiently in nature and through human reason; that, therefore, what they called "The Religion of Nature" was enough. Their conception was that God had created the universe, had placed it under the control of secondary laws and forces, had made it self-evidencing of the divine handiwork, and then had practically abandoned it — except, perhaps, to continue to uphold it as a whole. They practically denied the divine immanence.

For this reason the Christian apologists of that time — men like Butler, Clarke, Halyburton, Cudworth, Lardner, Horne, Paley, and Whately — devoted themselves largely to the thesis that a special revelation was needed for man's true well-being here and his assurance of life hereafter. They maintained, furthermore, that the Bible revealed the very things that man stood in need of, and that they were not clearly revealed in nature and through human reason. We may well take heed to the arguments of these staunch defenders of the faith. They were tall Christians, and helped to save Christianity from the destructive hands of the Deists, who were hostile to the Bible and Christianity, and sometimes were extremely violent in their attacks.

Can we today establish the proposition that man's true welfare demands a special manifestation from God? We believe we can. That God may be partly known by His works, no Christian would pretend to deny. The Bible itself frequently appeals to nature as a proof of God's existence and greatness. Says the psalmist, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork"

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(Ps. 19:1). The following passage from Isaiah is pertinent: "It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth . . . that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in" (Isa. 40:22). With this teaching Paul is in accord: "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20). In this verse we see that even the heathen, who have the light of nature, are without excuse for their corrupting sins. And, of course, it would stand to reason that the God who originally "created the heavens and the earth," would reveal Himself, at least to some extent, therein. In the latter part of the book of Job God Himself takes part in the debate, and a large portion of His argument consists of an appeal to the works of nature which reveal His infinite wisdom and power.

Likewise human reason, according to the Scriptures, is not wholly darkened. If it were, no appeals could be made to it. Yet in the prophecy of Isaiah God says to sinners, "Come now, and let us reason together" (Isa. 1:18). Samuel said to iniquitous Israel: "Now therefore stand still, that I may reason with you before the Lord of all the righteous acts of the Lord, which He did to you and to your fathers" (1 Sam. 12:7). Turn to Isaiah again: "Produce your cause, saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob" (Isa. 41:21, Amer. Rev.). Paul reasoned with the Jews in the synagogues, before Festus, Felix, and Agrippa, and in his discourse at Athens. In one place he writes: "Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good" (1 Thess. 5:21). The Bible does not depreciate reason, but simply admonishes us against its wrong use.

However, unaided human reason has not solved, and can-

not solve, many of our fundamental problems. In practical worldly matters it can, indeed, accomplish much, for which we ought to be duly thankful. But in the higher matters, and those, too, of the most vital concern, unaided human reason stumbles along blindly. How many real problems has human philosophy solved? Even with the aid of all our scientific investigation and apparatus, reason can only grope in the darkness on many vital problems. We have already seen in previous chapters how widely the secular philosophers differ on the most fundamental matters. Some of them are theists, others deists, others pantheists; and there are the positivists, the pluralists, and the out-and-out atheists. Among speculative thinkers it is impossible to bring about a *modus vivendi.* When the physical scientists enter the field of speculative philosophy, the result is "confusion worse confounded."

And the trouble with all human philosophy is, that it can give us only human guesses and opinions; it can arrive at no certitude. Yet the human intellect cries out for something that is true and positive, and the heart can be satisfied with nothing less than the assurance of truth. Human reason has not thus far supplied this need; and the difficulty is, it does not seem to be making progress in the direction of a solution of our fundamental problems.

Let us turn back to the manifestations of nature. While, as has been shown, we know something about God's personality, power, and wisdom from a study of the natural realm, it withholds many of its secrets from us. Does nature tell us much about a God of love? Has it informed us that God cares enough for us to save us from our sins, to redeem us from our transgressions, to bring us into real fellowship with Himself, and to assure us of life beyond the grave? Do we find a plan of redemption disclosed in the

domain of natural laws, forces, and entities? No; nature does not even give us a solution of the problems of her own origin, essence, purpose, and destiny. Even the composition of matter is a profound mystery. And who knows what force and life are? So we cannot see how thoughtful and serious-minded persons can say that we have no need of a further revelation than that which is given in nature and her phenomena.

When we turn to the ethnic religions, we seem to fare no better. Their devotees have had nature and reason as their guides throughout all their history. Have they succeeded in giving the rational mind a satisfying solution of life's deep problems? It is not probable that Hinduism, with its basis of pantheism and its doctrine of transmigration and final re-absorption into the impersonal All (or *Brahm*), contains much illumination that will satisfy the deep yearnings of the soul. Buddhism has a non-theistic basis, and its eschatology lands the individual in total extinction of being for the saint (*Arahat*), provided he can get rid of all desire (*tanha*), even the desire for conscious existence. Does that religion lead to any haven of rest or sphere of light? Confucianism is merely a social regime for the present world, and leaves the doctrine of the future a pure blank.

It is true, Mohammedanism is much superior in some ways to the purely ethnic religions, giving a satisfactory solution to some of man's profoundest problems; but, after all, as we have seen, the true doctrines that the Islamic system holds have been derived from the Old and New Testaments. As for Shintoism, Taoism, the ancient Turanian religions, animism and fetichism, no one, surely, will turn to them for light upon life's unsolved problems.

By the empirical process, therefore, we have found that there seems to be a sore need of some assuring voice from

heaven. Even Plato realized the need of a special revelation from the gods to make the way of life plainer. So there can be no doubt about the *need* of a special divine self-disclosure.

III. The Reasonableness of a Special Revelation.

Now, since nature and reason do not supply the knowledge we need in order to attain our highest well-being here and hereafter, it surely is reasonable to believe and to expect that the great Power which brought the universe into existence and which sustains it in its ongoing, would disclose Himself in some special way. Reasoning by analogy, that Power which gave fatherhood and motherhood to the world would be at least as kind and thoughtful as human parents are; and we know that they are anxious to give their children the information which they cannot attain for themselves. Jesus Himself used this analogical method of reasoning when He said: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" (Luke 11:13).

To specify somewhat: If God did not see fit to reveal Himself in a personal way in nature, as it is evident He did not, it is reasonable to believe that He would do so in some other way. The only way, as far as we can understand, by which He could do this would be by a personal manifestation of Himself. Again, if nature does not disclose God as a God of mercy and grace and redemption, what is more rational than to expect Him to make such a revelation in some other way? So the world desires and needs to hear a clear voice from the skies; a voice that will say something like this: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Can we hear such a voice? Has the world ever heard such a voice?

IV. The Biblical Record of Special Divine Revelations.

As has already been seen in the first division of this chapter, the Biblical writers profess to have received special revelations from on high. But there have been other professed special revelations, the doubter demurs; how shall we know that the revelation given in the Bible is the true one?

That is a legitimate question. It shall receive attention. When we examine the professed special revelations depicted in the Bible, do we find them answering to the cry of the mind and the heart for light on the fundamental problems which ought to be solved for us to make life happy and good? If we do, that is a cogent reason for believing that the Bible has given us a divine manifestation which we can accept as genuine. We shall name only some of the outstanding divine disclosures made in the Christian system, to see how relevant they are to fundamental human need.

1. *The Existence of the Divine Being.*

Having already shown the Biblical doctrine of God as personal, all-wise, all-powerful, everywhere present, loving, and just, we need not repeat any part of that section here. Our point now is this: the Bible teaches clearly that the God of the universe has made Himself personally known to men; has shown Himself to be interested in all their affairs, even to numbering of the hairs of their heads; that He cares even for the sparrow that falls, and therefore cares for each individual of the race; that He even made an infinite sacrifice to reveal His love and to rescue man from his lost estate of sin and misery. What more would men desire of God than to reveal such facts, if they are facts? Is not this precisely what we want to know about God — namely, that

He is and that He cares? There are even religionists and philosophers who fail to find God in nature and through human reason. Therefore it certainly would be a great gain for mankind for Him to disclose Himself. The Biblical self-disclosure of the divine Being is just the kind of revelation that the world needs. The probabilities are, then, that the Bible gives the true and rational record of God's special revelation of Himself.

Let us think of it in this way, too: If the Bible is not true, God has never made a clear revelation of Himself and His will and purposes, and so no man can be sure what they are, or even whether there is a personal God. That makes life a distressing and oppressive enigma. On the other hand, if the Bible is a true record of special theophanies, then our most fundamental problem, namely, that of the true character of the Ultimate and Eternal Reality, is most satisfactorily solved. This is a strong reason for believing that a special divine revelation has been made, and that through the Bible.

2. *The Problem of Origins.*

It certainly ought to be both satisfying and gratifying to the mind and heart of man to know how this universe came into existence.[1] It would help us greatly in life if we could be sure that a personal, good and all-wise God created the universe, and is therefore able to sustain it, and guide it and all its precious freight of human life, to their ultimate, divinely decreed destiny.

Well, that is precisely what the Bible professes to make known to mankind. When we think of it deeply, considering the profound yearnings of the human heart, we cannot help feeling that, if God did not make a special revela-

[1] Cf. L. F. Gruber, *Whence Came the Universe?* Also the present Author, *The Problem of Origins,* pp. 20-39.

tion regarding the origin of the universe, He ought to have done so. Is it not therefore reasonable to believe that He did reveal this great fact in a special way?

Much disputation from time immemorial has taken place regarding the origin of the human family. Today that problem is as acute as it ever was. But human science and speculation can give no certain answer to the inquiry. Yet it seems that we ought to know. To a great extent, our well-being hangs upon the question, Whence came the human family? If we do not know anything about the origin of man, it follows logically that we do not know anything about his purpose in the world and his future destiny. So the problem of the genesis of man seems to be a vital one — vital, at all events, to man's happiness and right living. It does seem that God should have told us whence we came.

If we know that man was originally created in the divine similitude, as the Bible clearly teaches, we may easily draw the conclusion, especially with the rest of the Bible before us, why he is here and whither he is bound. That knowledge certainly will make for the best, strongest and most inspiring life. It will put uplift and moral fiber into the soul. The Bible professes to tell us the *whence,* the *why* and the *whither* of the human race. Is it not probable that the Bible is right in giving this record, and therefore that God has given a special revelation regarding the origin of the human race?

But here is *sin* in the world. How came it to be here? The problem of its origin has ever been a Sphinx's riddle to human thought. And it is indeed a hard question. Ought we not to know how sin got started in the world? Is sin necessary? Is it eternal? Did it come into the world in time? Well, we ought to know. If we do not, "we are of all men most miserable." Should not God have told us?

But if the Bible contains a special divine revelation, we know precisely what was the genesis of sin. It originated through the wrong choice of a free moral agent. Then it is finite and limited. Then God can deal with it, and save men from its corruption and consequences, if He will. Is it not reasonable to believe that God would have revealed to us how this great calamity came upon the world which He created, so that we may know who is responsible for it? The only satisfactory solution is the one given in the Bible. That being true, God has given us a special revelation on the doctrine of hamartiology.

But the question of sin is the corollary of another crucial question: How shall sin be dealt with? Is there a cure for sin? Is there a possibility of being saved from sin, cleansed from its defilement, freed from its bondage, delivered from its penal consequences? We ought not to be left in the dark respecting this crucial problem. How can we live at our best with the handicap of ignorance respecting the disposition of the sin problem upon us?

If we turn to the Bible, we find there a professed revelation regarding this problem. God says that He sent His Son into the world to take upon Himself our sins, bear them to the cross, make expiation for them, and thus accomplish our deliverance for time and eternity. "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ." [2] Where else shall we turn for a solution of our problem? Can science tell us how to get rid of sin? Can human philosophy? Do the ethnic religions help us? No; all these simply deepen the gloom.

However, if the Bible is true, the problem is solved; but

[2] Rom. 7: 24, 25.

if the Bible is true, God has given us a special revelation regarding the elimination of sin. That is precisely what the world needs. It is rational to accept the Biblical doctrine. It can hardly be rational to reject it.[3]

3. *The Problem of Destiny.*

Since nature and reason can sound no certain note regarding the doctrine of the future life, it would seem that so paramount a question would also demand a special revelation? Ought we to be left in uncertainty regarding the ultimate destiny of man and the universe? If we are, the universe can hardly be called a rational universe.

But the Bible clearly opens up the gateway of immortality for the soul, resurrection for the body, and glorification for the cosmos. The Scriptural teaching on this point is abundant (cf. John 14:1-3; Rom. 8:16-23; 2 Cor. 5:1; 1 Pet. 1:4). And the Bible is the only book which assures us without peradventure that there is a life beyond the grave, and the only book, too, which portrays a future life that is worth living. But the Bible tells us of the heavenly heritage only by a special revelation from God.

The problems just dealt with are paramount problems. If we cannot solve them by our unaided reason, as we surely cannot, they ought to be made clear to us in some other way. They *are* made clear and sure if the Bible is true; and they are made clear and sure in no other religion or philosophy. Therefore the Bible, which professes to contain a special divine revelation, tells us just what we ought to know, and thus meets our deepest and most vital needs. That makes it reasonable to believe that the Bible is true. If it is true,

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[3] The Biblical explication of the origin, as well as the cure of sin, is treated more fully in the Author's book, *Man's First Disobedience.*

let us rejoice greatly and ring the changes on the fact, as a glad refrain, that it contains a special divine revelation.

V. Why a Written Record Was Made.

From every viewpoint Christianity proves itself to be permeated with rationality. By that token it is rightly called the true philosophy. According to the Holy Scriptures, God made special disclosures of just what men need to know, but of no more.

Now, if He ever made such revelations, what would be the best way to preserve them and pass them on from generation to generation? Surely by seeing to it that they were properly recorded, and in due time assembled in a book. In no other way could their contents have been preserved intact. Memory and tradition would have been unreliable, as we know from many historical instances, as well as instances right at hand today. So God acted in the sensible and normal way in giving us the Bible as the inspired chronicle of His special dealings with the human family.

This method was better than continuous supernatural manifestations through all the ages and to all generations and persons would have been; because such a regimen would have involved such constant miraculous operations as to nullify the uniformity and steadfastness of natural law.

Besides, if a written record of special divine revelations was made, it would have to be thoroughly reliable, and thus without error, or it would be of doubtful value to the human family. If every man can pick and choose in the Bible, accept or reject it just as he pleases, then, after all, human reason becomes the norm of judgment, and we have "no sure word of prophecy," no dependably inspired rule of faith and life. It is far better to regard the Holy Bible as divinely inspired throughout, and then *explain* the apparent

difficulties rather than stumble over them. For the most part, they yield beautifully to reverent and scholarly treatment.

VI. The Closing of the Biblical Canon.

Moreover, God acted in a rational way when, having given as much special revelation as was necessary for man's highest well-being, He saw to it that the Biblical Canon was closed. Had less been given, it would have been insufficient; had more been given, it would have been superfluous. As the Bible reveals just enough, we can live happily, nobly, uprightly, and hopefully, and wait, without too much strain upon our patience and faith, for the fuller revelation which will be made in the heavenly life. The words of the apostle on this point are so relevant and comforting, one cannot help feeling that they must be true: "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:16-18).

CHAPTER XII

THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF MAN

I. Introductory Note.

Without repeating what has previously been said respecting the Christian doctrine of anthropology, our purpose in this chapter will be to show that the Christian conception of man is all-sided, adequate and exalted; that it is, all told, the highest and most satisfying view that is possible. The Christian system deals with man in his integral nature, and does not mutilate him into a torso. It also makes provision for his temporal and eternal well-being in the integrity of his whole complex nature. Let us classify our material.

II. Man's Origin.

If the Biblical doctrine of man's origin is true, it gives us the most exalted conception of *genus homo.* Then man, having been directly created in the divine likeness, must be an important being; a being capable of great achievements and worthy of a great destiny. Then, too, it is reasonable to believe that God is interested in man's well-being. He is God's child by an immediate act of creation. If God made him at once a rational and responsible personality, then He would at once be interested in and solicitous for his best welfare.

To indicate and criticize an opposing view, we would say: If God first made man a mere amœba, then a clam or oyster,

by and by a bloodthirsty animal, and then developed him by means of an incarnadined struggle for existence during a wearisome age-long process, then it is difficult to see that He felt a very deep concern for him. By that view it is also impossible to know just when man became a rational, responsible, and immortal being, so that God could deal with him on a moral and spiritual basis. How different if the Biblical doctrine is true! It would seem that philosophy would accept the view that is the most uplifting and rational.

If man was created as the Bible teaches, that fact will account adequately for a number of important data. It will explain the origin of man as a personal being, for a personal God would naturally desire to create beings with whom He could hold personal communion. The Biblical view will account for man's ethical nature, for a good and holy God would naturally desire to create beings in His own similitude; beings who could distinguish between right and wrong, and would of their own volition choose the right. The Biblical view also gives a rational and adequate explication of man's inherent religious nature; for since man was created in the divine likeness, he must have been a religious being from the start, because he possessed the capacity at once for holding conversation with God. Again, accepting for the time being the Biblical view of man's direct creation in the divine similitude, we can readily see that, if he lost that image through a wrong use of his freedom, the Son of God could come to him, enshrine Himself in true human nature without incongruity, take His place beneath the law of justice, and thus redeem him and restore in him the divine image. All these facts are so reasonable, winsome, and appealing, it would seem that reasoning people should accept them as the real philosophical explanation of man's origin and nature.

III. Man's Dual Nature.

Regarded in this totality, the Bible gives an all-sided view of man's nature. It is not one-sided and inadequate as are many merely human conceptions. For example, the monism of our day fails fatally to account for many human facts and experiences. And this is true, whether one accepts the materialistic or the idealistic philosophy and psychology.[1]

The Bible teaches with transparent explicitness that man is a dual being, composed of soul and body.[2] In Gen. 1:26, 27 we have the teaching that man's psychical nature was divinely created.[3] The image of God in man would imply this, for God is a Spirit or a Mind. In Gen. 2:7 the record tells us how man's body was fashioned[4] from the finest material of the soil,[5] and then the soul, created in the divine image, was breathed into the body thus formed, so that the two entities were organically joined in one integral being. The mind and the body are by their very constitution fitted to and for each other; but neither is transubstantiated into the other, nor are the two consubstantiated into a *tertium quid.*

Now, we maintain that, on the basis of adequacy and causality, which are the two fundamental principles of phi-

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[1] For a fuller development of this thesis, see a previous chapter.

[2] We do not oppose those theologians who hold that man is a trichotomy, consisting of body, soul, and spirit, although we prefer to regard him as a dichotomy. All evangelical Christians will agree on the bottom fact, that man is at least a dual being. Tripartism would include dualism.

[3] The Hebrew verb *bara* is here used; in this context it means to *create;* to make something that had no prior existence.

[4] Here the Hebrew verb *yatsar* is used, meaning to fashion or to mold. Note that *bara* is not used in this verse, because the material from which man's body was formed had been previously created, according to Gen. 1:1.

[5] Hebrew, *aphar,* dust, the finest portion of the soil.

losophy, all human behavior, whether physical or psychical, can be rationally explained by accepting the Biblical record. If man were only a material monad, it would be impossible to explain any of his mental experiences; because matter, as far as we know anything about it, is incapable of feeling, consciousness, thought, and volition. To assume that it can experience these facts is to enter into the field of pure speculation and conjecture. On the other hand, if man were only a psychical monad, no one could explain his many bodily experiences. But assuming that man is what the Bible describes him to be, a dual being, consisting of a living body and a rational soul, his total life and experience can be and are adequately accounted for. You have posited a sufficient cause for all the effects. Therefore when Christ spoke of the body and soul of man, He was revealing man's true and total constitution. A proposition again that points to Christianity as a true philosophy.

IV. Man's Specific Psychology.

Our purpose here is to treat of man's purely psychical nature, and indicate that the elements of the Christian system fit into it as if man and our religion were made for each other. They fit "like the paper on the wall."

1. *The Power of Self-Analysis or Introspection.*

By analysis we find that man's mind has certain fundamental functioning powers. He becomes conscious of these several faculties by means of introspection. The present-day monists in psychology who scoff at the idea of mental faculties are unwise and unscientific; for the word "faculty" is derived from the Latin *facio, facere,* to make, do, perform; hence it means a mental power or capacity to do things. Surely, if we know anything about the human mind, it has certain distinct powers.

Neither is it scientific to rail at what is known as *introspection.* The mind certainly has the faculty of scrutinizing its own thoughts, states, and actions. If it does not possess such a power, how would men know anything about themselves? How would they even be able to know that they exist and think? How does it happen that we have and hold the word "introspection," if it stands for no experience of the human soul? Words are always coined and used as symbols of thoughts and experiences. Just as clearly as we can observe our outward actions, and the movements of our nerves and muscles, just so clearly are we aware of our inward feelings and conditions. The heart of real psychology lies in the power of the mind to engage in self-scrutiny; indeed, it is the only way by which the science of the mind can be organized and developed. If the mind had no power of self-seeing, we could not even be aware of our outward environment and its effect upon us. Even the behaviorist could not observe muscular movements, and then write a book on his observations, if he did not have the capacity of self-consciousness and self-determination.

The Biblical writers were better psychologists than are the modern advocates of monism. Everywhere on its sacred pages man's power to know himself and his moral and spiritual status is implied. Solomon says: "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he." Solomon here refers to a man who is a deceiver. Again the wise man says: "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." When the psalmist said, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer," he was acknowledging the possibility of introspection. The same truth is implied in this passage: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Similar is the teaching of

Jesus: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." With this doctrine Paul agrees: "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup," referring to proper spiritual preparation for partaking of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Yea, the Holy Scriptures teach us the correct fundamental psychology.

Now, since we are capable of intently studying the action of our minds, and observing the conduct of other people who also have minds, we are able to classify to some extent the various function powers of the human soul. The threefold division of the mind into Intellect, Emotion, and Will is as convenient and scientific a classification as we can discover, because it is based on the general experience of the race; we might well call it the *consensus gentium.*

2. *The Intellect.*

Does the Bible appeal to our intellectual powers, and enjoin their cultivation? It certainly does. While the way of salvation itself is said to be "so plain that the wayfaring men, though fools, need not err therein" (Isa. 35:8), yet there are many deep truths in the Bible which challenge the best powers of the trained intellect. In many ways the Bible is by no means a primer. Somewhere we read in it about "the deep things of God." Christian theology, based upon the Bible, is one of the profoundest disciplines of our schools. Perhaps more books have been written on the Bible and the Christian religion than on any other one subject. Besides, many giant intellects have been engaged in this kind of study, investigation, and explication.

A true religion, a religion that comes from God, the Ultimate Being, should be plain and simple enough in its essential teaching for everybody; and yet, in order to fit the needs

of all classes of people, it should also contain sufficient depth and height and breadth to occupy the thought of the tallest intellects. And that is what the Christian religion does — another proof of its all-sphered character.

All that is necessary at this time is to name some of the sub-faculties under the major faculty of the intellect, in order to see how essential they are to the human mind and its proper and efficient action; then let us remember that Christianity recognizes them, makes room for their functional activities, and purifies and enlightens them. They are reason, memory, imagination, reflection, conscience, spirituality, and all the intuitions of objective reality, time, space, axioms, the difference between right and wrong, the soul's relation to God. Nor does Christianity overlook the fact that the senses are also a part of man's constitution, for it often speaks of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and sensory feeling.

Note such a mental power as reflection: what has the Bible to say about it? Of the upright man the psalmist says: "His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law doth he meditate day and night" (Ps. 1:2). Again he declares: "While I was musing the fire burned; then spake I with my tongue" (Ps. 39:3). Says Paul, after reciting a list of sterling virtues, "Think on these things" (Phil. 4:8). Other intellectual powers might be Biblicized in the same way, showing that Christianity appeals to man's whole intellectual make-up, just as an all-sided religion for the whole human family should do.

3. *The Emotions.*

No analysis of the human mind would be complete which did not take cognizance of the emotional part of man's nature. The emotions are known under various names, as,

for example, the feelings, the sensibilities, the susceptibilities. They are an important part of man's psychical constitution. They furnish warmth to human life and motive power to the will.

Has Christianity a place for the emotions? It is a patent fact that it has. It stirs the holiest feelings in the soul; it purifies those that have been corrupted by sin; it appeals to fear, but not to an ultra extent; it begets love and joy in the heart; it calms the tempest-tossed soul, and brings to it "the peace which passeth all understanding." Yes, it touches and plays upon the whole gamut of human feeling. Do not these facts make the Christian religion strikingly persuasive?

A few salient instances may be cited. Our Lord said: "Fear not them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28). In perilous circumstances, it is certainly right to appeal to men's fears. Not to do so would be to deal with another kind of nature than the human nature which we know. So Christ was right here; He was pursuing the normal pedagogical method. And yet afterwards the apostle John wrote these comforting words: "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out all fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love" (1 John 4:18). Thus we see that the fear of the unregenerate and convicted man is cancelled when the love of God enters his heart. Here we have the perfect correlation of fear and love.

Another instance of fitness to the emotional nature of man is the creating of joy in the heart. Said the psalmist: "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation." He had not lost his salvation, but the joy of it had gone from him. Our Lord deals with the same emotion: "These things have I

spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." Hence the apostle could enjoin: "Rejoice evermore"; "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice." Another apostle tuned in with the same refrain: "Whom, having not seen, ye love: in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pet. 1:8). The Holy Scriptures represent the heavenly state as one of pure and perfect joy, with pleasures of the most satisfying kind. The believer's future life is to be a diapason and a pæan. There is no emotion of the soul that is not touched in some way by the gospel of Jesus Christ: if it is a sinful emotion, to correct it; if it is a righteous emotion, to heighten it.

Yet the Christian system does not uphold emotionalism, which means overwrought feeling, or emotion carried to the extreme. While John the Baptist promised that Christ would baptize His people with the Holy Ghost and with fire, he did not mean "wildfire." In Christian living and Christian worship and service everything is to be done "decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:40). Perhaps it is going too far to say, "Order is heaven's first law." It is, however, true, according to the Holy Scriptures, that order is one of heaven's primary laws.

4. *The Will.*

Man, as a rational being, and as a finite replica of his infinite Creator, is endued with another regal power: the *Will.* Good definitions of this faculty are: The self-determining power of the mind; the capacity of the soul to choose and execute; the autonomy of the Ego or the Self.[6]

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[6] For a somewhat developed treatment of the human will, according to the Biblical teaching, see the Author's *A Manual of Christian Ethics,* pp. 64-67, 116; also his more recent work: *A Handbook of Christian Psychology.*

In this place it is our purpose only to indicate that the Christian system is all-sphered, and therefore does not ignore this outstanding functioning power of the human mind. Everywhere in the Bible man is treated as if he were, in a measure and a sense, a free being; never as if he were a mere automaton or a robot.

Even when men are said to be "dead in trespasses and sins," they are treated as if they were conscious and active beings, not as if they were literally dead; for, in the verses that follow, Paul adds that these same "dead" people were very much alive in some ways; that they "walked according to the course of this world"; that they had "conversation in times past in the lusts of the flesh"; that they "were by nature the children of wrath." So Paul meant that they were spiritually dead — that is, they were living in sin instead of to God and spiritual realities.

Every Scriptural injunction given to man connotes some degree of freedom, else the command would be absurd. When our first parents were enjoined to "be fruitful, and multiply, and complete and subdue the earth"; to eat of the various kinds of fruit in the Edenic garden; to abstain from eating of the inhibited tree; to dress and keep the garden; to name the animals; and when they were rebuked and chastised because they disobeyed God's command — all these facts imply that man was a free being. So he is treated in the whole Bible. Jesus said to the obstinate Scribes and Pharisees, "Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life" (John 5:40); and, weeping over Jerusalem, He said, "And ye would not" (Matt. 23:37). Thus He always treated people as if they had freedom enough to accept the salvation He was bringing them.

The Christian system, therefore, is not one-sided in its psychological teaching and treatment of men, but recognizes

all the complexes of his mental and physical being. In this respect it is superior to a good deal of modern psychology, which slights, overlooks, or denies some of the major functioning powers of the human mind, and thus becomes one-sided and narrow. The so-called determinists in psychology, who deny that man has any conative power, and who regard him as only a "mechanical mosaic," surely have not studied the human mind as thoroughly as they should have done, but have become enmeshed in a materialistic view of man and the world. When the human mind is studied judiciously and thoroughly, it will be seen that man is just as clearly conscious of volitional acts as he is of the play of his larynxial muscles or any other muscular or sensory experience. Man surely is something vastly more than a mere sensorium. Let any man test himself, and see whether he has not the gift of choice. He knows he is not driven and coerced in many of his thoughts and actions. Every time a debate occurs in the human soul, every time a man "must make up his mind one way or the other," he is aware of his own power to elect and select, and of the necessity of his doing so.

Further argument is not needed here.[7] Our point here is that the Christian teaching is all-sphered in its psychology.

Yet Christianity does a good deal more than merely recognize the human will and make a place for its exercise; it also indicates how it may be released from its spiritual bondage. In what is known in theology as "civil righteousness," the natural will of man has considerable freedom; for many unregenerate people are good citizens from the

[7] A still more elaborate discussion of the libertarian view of the will over against the deterministic view, than that above referred to, may be found in the Author's *A System of General Ethics*, pp. 112-129, 209-212.

viewpoint of mere worldly morality. This fact is recognized everywhere by Christian people.

But so far as regards spiritual matters, the natural will is in thralldom, and cannot function until it has been spiritually awakened, illumined and regenerated. This is what Christ means when He teaches that, unless "anyone be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Paul's doctrine is the same: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14).

Now at this critical point Christianity proves its adequacy, and meets man's emergency. In the work of regeneration the Holy Spirit begets a new spiritual life within the soul, and by that act disenthralls the human will, enabling it to function spiritually in accord with the holy will of God. Moreover, after regeneration, begins the work of progressive sanctification, in which the Holy Spirit constantly reinforces and complements the human will, making it more and more capable of spiritual and ethical functioning. In this respect the Christian system is unique; it imparts to man a new life, energy, and activity that are unknown to human philosophies and ethnic religions. Thus, if man ever is a robot, the Holy Spirit is able to cure him of his malady, and convert him into a rational, purposive agent. Again Christianity is proved to be the true philosophy.

Having now dealt at sufficient length with man's psychical powers, let us consider Christianity's method of dealing with him in the totality of his being.

V. Man's Total Nature.

The Christian system deals with man in the totality of his being, and thus proves its wholeness and dimensional

character. To make good this assertion, let us consider man in his tripartite make-up — body, mind, and spirit. If this is not an exact psychological division, it is, at all events, another scientific method of classifying man's composite powers.

1. *Man's Corporeal System.*

What has Christianity to say of man's body? A great deal. In fact, it makes provision for its temporal well-being and its eternal destiny. Whatever else may be said of this teaching, it cannot justly be called narrow. True, the body might be termed the nethermost story of man's nature; yet the Bible nowhere neglects or slights it. Although Paul says that "bodily exercise is profitable for a little, while godliness is profitable unto all things"; yet he does not mean thereby to disparage the human body, but simply to indicate the comparative values of the soul-life and the body-life. Bodily exercise *per se* is profitable for something, but is not supremely important. Again Paul says, "I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection" (1 Cor. 9:27); but that does not mean that the body is to be lacerated and subjected to an ascetic regime; it means that it is not to be permitted to have dominion over man's spiritual powers.

Indeed, nowhere in the Holy Scriptures is man's corporeal nature, in and of itself, treated with contumely, after the manner of Plato, the Manicheans and the ascetics. The body, when it is given a rightful place in the kingdom of Christ, is called "the temple of the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. 6: 19).

The word *soma,* body, is never used in the bad sense in the New Testament. The word *sarx,* flesh, is sometimes used in the good sense, sometimes in the bad. In John 1: 14,

"And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us," it is used in the good sense, referring to the incarnation of the Son of God. In Rom. 8:7, "The mind of the flesh[8] is enmity against God," it is used in the bad sense. In each case the context easily settles the sense in which it is employed.

Instead of belittling and contemning the human body, Biblical Christianity gives it its rightful place in the cosmos and the life and destiny of man. In this respect it differs widely from the teaching of such religions as Hinduism and Buddhism. Let us note the importance attached in Christian teaching to man's physical organism. When God created and formed other objects of the cosmos, He simply spoke them into being; when He fashioned the human body, He took more pains; for the Bible teaches that He formed it directly from the finest material of the soil, and then breathed into it the breath of life, so that man became a living being.

When the Son of God became incarnate, He assumed a human body, as well as human psychical essence; He lived and wrought in that body, bore man's sins in His own body on the tree, died and was buried, rose from the dead to live forevermore, and at length ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on High, so that "in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."

Neither have we yet told the whole story. While we shall all die, and our bodies shall molder to their kindred element, the Bible promises that, when the last trump shall sound, our bodies shall be raised from the dead, shall be glorified, and shall be reunited with our redeemed souls; and then man, in the totality of his being, as he came originally from

[8] Amer. Rev., literal translation.

the creative and fashioning hand of God, shall start forth on his endless career of destiny and possibility, in the glorified physical universe and the infinite spiritual universe. Whatever may be thought or said of the Christian doctrine, it cannot be said to underrate the importance and place of the human body. It is not one-sided. It promises a marvelous destiny for the whole man. It makes man "all immortal." Had no provision been made in the plan of redemption for the recovery of the body, the apostle could not have truthfully said that Christ would destroy *all* the works of the devil. Neither could another apostle have said: "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15:26).

It is reasonable, hence it is philosophical, to believe that God would provide an immortal destiny for the human body. If He did not, why would He have fashioned such an organism? Why would He have made it such a marvelous mechanism, and united it with the rational human soul? If the soul only is to have an immortal destiny, it would have been much more economical for God to have created only a spiritual world. Since God has created a physical universe, and made it so vast, it is hardly reasonable to believe that He will ever annihilate it. If it is to last forever; if it is to have an immortal destiny, what could be more fitting than that God should give to man a glorified physical organism with which to have a vital, joyful and direct connection with the glorified cosmos! With his body he is vitally related to the physical universe; with his soul he is vitally related to all spiritual realities. Surely a sane and engaging destiny is that for man! If it is true, it surely makes human life worth while. If it is not true, *cui bono?*

2. *Man's Intellectual Nature.*

Is Biblical Christianity on the side of intellectual culture?

Does the Holy Bible anywhere disparage human learning? Nowhere. It may sometimes admonish men against pride and conceit, and the false wisdom which is arrogant toward the divine omniscience; but the right kind of knowledge is always enjoined.

At the very beginning of the human family God took the progenitors of the race under tutelage — that is, He began to train them; as it were, He put them to school. The whole history of the revelation of God is a pedagogical history. Note how the Bible exalts true knowledge. "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting, get understanding" (Prov. 4:7). The book of Proverbs was expressly written to "give prudence to the simple, and to the young man knowledge and discretion" (Prov. 1:4; Amer. Rev.). The same writer says: "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity, and scoffers delight in scoffing, and fools hate knowledge?" (Prov. 1:22). Jehovah said through the prophet: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hos. 4:6). A major prophet not only commended learning, but revealed its high and beneficent purpose: "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I might be able to speak a word in season to him that is weary" (Isa. 50:4). One translator gives the rest of the verse in this way: "Morning by morning He awakens me to learn my lesson." An apostle gives this injunction: "And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge"; "But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:5; 3:18).

But enough citations have been given. It might be well for people who are uninformed on this subject to study the Bible and see how often wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and kindred words standing for mental culture, are extolled.

This is the reason why Christian people establish schools, colleges, and universities all over the land. The fact is, wherever true Biblical Christianity has gone, it has placed the church and the schoolhouse side by side. Infidelity may boast of its superior learning, and hold up Christian people to scorn as ignorant and superstitious; yet it remains an obvious fact that organized infidelity has not established, and is not now supporting by its own efforts, a single first-class liberal arts college or university in the land; whereas the educational institutions of the Christian church dot the country from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the Great Lakes to the Great Gulf. The same holds true in other lands. This is not said unkindly, for the author desires to give offense to no one; but he believes that the truth ought to be spoken plainly, for the reason that unbelievers are constantly accusing Christians of crass ignorance; whereas Christianity is the friend of education and the foe of illiteracy. And this is true even while, at the same time, it does not overstress mere intellectual culture, nor regard it as in itself all-sufficient. At this juncture, therefore, we are led to our next division.

3. *Man's Spiritual Enduement.*

Since the claim is here made that Christianity is a philosophy as well as a religion, it ought to prove itself as many-sided as is man's complex nature. We have spoken of man's body as the lower story of his being. His intellectual nature might be called the second story. But man is more; he is great enough to have a third story, the highest of all, the climacteric of his being. Christianity does not cut off a man's head midway of his brow, and make a torso out of him. It teaches that man has an uppermost soul-power which is called the spiritual faculty. This is the

apex of his tripartite being. It is that faculty of the soul whose windows are always open toward Jerusalem; that tower faculty with which he holds communion with God and all other spiritual personalities; that faculty by which he apprehends the realities that are ultimate and absolute.

Far too many people today disregard the spiritual life, and thus prove themselves one-sided. A true, fully sphered philosophy will not ignore or slight any kind of human experience, and especially that which is of the highest and finest order and value. As to the fact that man has a religious faculty, no one ought to be in doubt, since religion is practically universal. So outstanding and pandemic a phenomenon will not be shunted to one side by the philosopher who is broad-minded and whose judgment is not warped and contracted by *ex parte* prepossessions. At all events, the Christian system takes into consideration man's total being, gives a satisfactory account of his complex of powers, and promises an immortal destiny for the whole man.

VI. Man a Citizen of Two Worlds.

In still another respect Biblical Christianity can be shown to be all-inclusive. Somewhere the apostle Paul puts the case thus: "Bodily exercise is profitable for a little; but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." The Greek word for "godliness" is *eusebeia,* which means piety or religion. Of course, Paul meant the Christian religion.

1. *The Present Life.*

Religion, says Paul, "has promise of the life that now is." That is just what an all-inclusive religion should have. Biblical religion is practical; it is a religion for this mundane sphere. This life comes first; afterward the other. "He

that believeth on the Son of God *hath* eternal life." It does not say, "will have." Christianity is a religion of the present tense, not merely of the future.

Some people, whose minds are narrower than the Biblical teaching, seem to think that religion is good only for dying beds. Certainly it is good for the dying saint; but it is also good for living; just as good for living as for dying. The patent fact is, if we see to it that we have living grace while we are alive and well, God will see to it that we have dying grace when we need it.

A mistaken notion of non-Christian people often is, that Christians neglect the practical duties of the present life by sitting and dreaming about the coming raptures of heaven. In a life extending over some years, we have met many Christian people, but cannot remember one whom we had reason to believe was too heavenly minded; we have met hundreds who were certainly too worldly minded! It is only a canard to represent Christians as spending their time in contemplating the future to the neglect of the present. Most Christians will admit that "the world is too much with us."

But Biblical Christians are practical folk, and so they attend to the everyday duties of life. The garb with which they are clad is good for everyday wear, not merely for Sunday. It cannot be soiled by any honorable kind of toil. It can be soiled by only one thing — sin. The more it is truly worn, the whiter and more glistering it becomes. If sin is kept out of the heart, it cannot be injured by persecution and trial. It permeates all life. It irradiates every nook and corner of human experience. Nothing that is good and useful is foreign to it. It is not an exotic in the present world. As long as we are here, and true Christians, our religion is indigenous to this planet.

2. *The Life to Come.*

However, we must continue to insist that the religion of Christ is not contracted. After saying that "godliness has promise of the life that now is," if Paul had stopped and had stuck a period there, he would have had as narrow a vision as some would-be philosophers have today. But he was *toto coelo* from that view. Had he been writing in English, he would have placed a comma at the point in his sentence which we have now reached, and then swept on, just as he did, to his grand climax: "and also of that which is to come."

Now, we must leave it to you to say, ye philosophers, whether that is a narrow religion! Surely a system which has promise of the present life and of an immortal destiny cannot be said to be short-visioned, whatever else may be said of it. The mechanistic philosophy of the day, which says that this brief span of our mundane life is all; that it "is all of life to live and all of death to die"; that every human career ends forever in a winding sheet and a grave — surely such a philosophy may justly be called narrow, so narrow, indeed, as to be nauseating; of the earth, earthy. With such a view dominant today in many academic circles, there is little cause for wonder that many people are crying, *Cui bono?*

But the Christian religion presents for our acceptance a dimensional philosophy, an architectonic structure, with an unlimited plan and blueprint. The vision of Christian faith knows no obscurity and no narrow prison walls. It is as high, deep, and wide as infinity and as perduring as eternity. A system that so pushes back every horizon and opens up the gateway of a sure and blissful futurity has everything to say in its favor as an adequate philosophy for the whole

world of humanity. The well-poised character of the Christian faith in respect to the present life and the future is one of its most engaging, as well as one of its most rational, features, and ought to commend it to the sober thought of the people of this world. No other religion is so all-inclusive, no other philosophy so adequate.

CHAPTER XIII

CHRISTIANITY'S PERFECT ETHICAL STANDARD

I. Religion and Ethics.

As it is generally used, religion is the term which denotes a whole body of belief relating to the supernatural. It consists of two elements, spirituality and morality. The former describes man's relation as a spiritual being to supernatural beings, who are usually regarded as spiritual personalities. Morality is that element of religion which determines man's relation to and practice of righteousness. It has to do with facts and principles of right and wrong.

In some religions the ethical element is not nearly so integral and dominant as in others. Hence men may sometimes be called "very religious" without being morally upright. This criticism, however, cannot rightly be brought against the Christian religion, if it is held and practiced in its wholeness and purity; for in this religion righteousness is an absolutely essential factor. This fact will be brought out clearly as we proceed, although it may be said here that, to speak of "a wicked Christian," is to use contradictory terms; for if man is a wicked man, he is by that very token no Christian at all. It would be just as consistent to speak of a black white man. The relevant Biblical teaching on this thesis will be brought forward later on, but here we might cite a couple of proof-texts: "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord"; "For God hath not called us unto un-

cleanness, but unto holiness"; "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." In this last passage we see the perfect synthesis of the spiritual and the ethical elements in the Christian religion. Christianity is, therefore, an ethico-spiritual system.

It is not our purpose in this chapter to develop a system of Christian ethics, but only to point out as briefly as possible the clarity, depth, all-sidedness, and well-balanced character of the moral teaching of Christianity thus showing that it has an adequate rational and philosophical foundation. Of course, our appeal must be made to Christianity's source-book, the Bible.

II. Clear Moral Distinctions.

Some modern writers on ethics blur moral distinctions, by which we mean the fundamental difference and antagonism between right and wrong. This fault is not committed by the writers of the Bible. Indeed, the sin of making that false synthesis is severely rebuked by the prophet: "Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil; that put darkness for light and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!" (Isa. 5: 20). This means that the unlike and the antithetical are not to be mixed. "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" (Amos 3: 3). "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial?" (2 Cor. 6:14, 15).

From the beginning of Biblical history to the end the distinction between good and evil is clearly drawn, even though, of course, in exceptional cases difficulties may arise on account of the entrance of sin into the world. Let us note the data for the differentiation.

In the creative narrative of Genesis 1, the writer at each crucial epoch represents God as pronouncing His creation *good.* At the close of the creation, which included man brought forth in His own image, He pronounced His whole completed work *very good* (Gen. 1:31; Hebrew, *me-od tov,* supremely or superlatively good). The Hebrew adjective *tov,* good, is applied to moral and spiritual good, as well as to physical fitness, in many places in Holy Scripture. Therefore, in the very first chapter of the Bible we have set forth the clear connotation of a distinction between good and evil; for to declare a thing good implies the possibility of the not-good.

In the second chapter the same conception is brought out even more explicitly. The forbidden tree in the Edenic garden is expressly called "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." The very words here employed indicate the radical difference between the good and the evil. When Cain's offering was not accepted, Jehovah said to him: "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? If thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." Why were most of the antediluvians destroyed by the deluge? The reason is given very clearly in the Holy Scriptures: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

The Bible nowhere records that divine punishment was visited upon people except for their wickedness. On the other hand, the righteous are always commended and rewarded. Of course, sometimes the penalty for sin was severe, as in the case of the destruction of all the people, young and old alike; but the element of corruption had doubtless gone so far that the whole race would have been plunged to destruction ultimately if drastic measures had

not been used. In that case the destruction would have been gradual, but would have been still more wholesale. For example, God did not command the Canaanites to be destroyed in a merely resentful and arbitrary spirit, for the record says expressly that they were punished on account of their abominable iniquities. After naming some of the abominations of which they were guilty, Moses said to the people of Israel: "Defile not yourselves in any of these things: for in all these things the nations are defiled which I cast out before you: and the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you: for all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled; that the land spue you not out also when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that were before you" (Lev. 18:24-28) The same stern truth is taught by Moses in Deuteronomy: "For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out before thee" (Deut. 18:12).

In every other case of severe punishment recorded in the Bible the only cause assigned was the iniquity of the people. When Israel sinned, they were chastised; whenever they returned to the Lord and did that which was right, He restored them to divine favor and showered His blessings upon them. The severity of the divine retributions is intended to impress upon mankind the heinous, defiling, destructive, and anarchistic character of sin. Instead of finding fault with the teaching of the Bible, would it not be wiser for men to confess and forsake their sins, accept God's

challenge to righteousness, live holy lives before Him, and thus help to enhance the morality and felicity of the world?

Moreover, it should be remembered that the God of nature sometimes brings dire casualties upon people, and sometimes the innocent must suffer with the guilty. Or suppose that the atheist is right in holding that there is no God; then Nature herself often imposes terrible calamities upon portions of the human race. So it is inconsistent to pick faults with the God of the Bible, who administered punishment upon people only for wrong-doing, and always rewarded obedience to the law of right. Besides, the Bible adds the encouraging statements that all inequalities and miscarriages of justice in the present life will be properly adjudicated in the life to come.[1]

Much further proof that the Bible makes clear moral distinctions might be cited, but this fact will be further developed in what follows.

III. The Righteous Character of God.

Unlike many other religions, the Christian system represents God as perfect in righteousness. Anyone who is familiar with Biblical teaching knows that this is true of the whole trend and animus of the Biblical representation; so that it scarcely seems to be necessary to cite specific passages. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" exclaimed Abraham. "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne," says the psalmist. Other statements of similar import are as follows: "Be ye holy, for I am holy"; "I will praise the Lord according to His righteousness"; "The heavens shall declare His righteousness"; "Thy right hand, O God, is full of righteousness"; "Righteous

[1] In this connection it might be well to read the following texts: Ps. 34:15, 17, 19, 22; 119:67, 71.

art thou, O Lord"; "There is none good but one, God"; "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect"; "Holy Father."

The objection is brought by infidels and liberalists that the God of the Bible at times is quite stern; but that, as has been said before, is on account of His attitude toward sin, upon which He cannot look with any degree of allowance. A God of such sturdy moral character and reactions ought to challenge men's respect. Could men revere a God who was moved by mere sentimental and nonethical love toward His subjects?

Sometimes, too, the objection is raised that God is angry. But what the Bible really teaches is, that "God is angry with the wicked every day" (Ps. 7:11); but He is never depicted as being angry with the righteous. What is meant by God's anger and wrath? They do not mean petty resentment and ill will; they mean the reaction of His righteousness against sin; and that is the only kind of a God whom men can respect and worship.

IV. The Ultimate Ground and Source of Right.

Christianity proves itself correct, profound and philosophical in going back to the Ultimate Personality for the ground of right. It is contrary to the constitution and nature of reality to think that the moral could arise from a nonmoral source. As we have previously seen, that would nullify the fundamental law of causality. No effect can be produced by a cause that is inadequate or that is different in character and quality from itself. So when we are looking for the ultimate ground of right, we can find it only in moral Personality; and that means God, and the kind of a God, too, that the Bible portrays and that Christianity accepts. That all moral good in the world comes from God is so

clearly taught in the Holy Scriptures that it needs no further elaboration here, except to say that, since God created the universe and made it a moral economy, He must be the author of all the good resident within it.

V. The Source of Wrong.

This doctrine has already received sufficient attention in this treatise, and is simply introduced here to round out the present chapter on Christian morality. The Bible gives the only adequate account of the origin of sin and its entrance into the world: it arose through the wrong choice of an agent who was gifted with the high prerogative of choosing between his own desire and the will of his Creator. In no other way could it have arisen and still be called sin in the sense of guilt. If it came into existence in any other way, it would make God the author of sin, and that is unthinkable; for if the Ultimate, Self-existent, Eternal Personality were to do wrong — if such an event is at all conceivable — it would shatter and destroy His own being and plunge the universe into utter catastrophe.

Thus the Bible, Christianity's source-book, gives us the only rational explanation of the genesis of sin, and therefore proves itself to be the true philosophy.

VI. The Bible Always Upholds the Right.

This proposition, that the Bible always upholds the highest standard of righteousness, carries with it the obverse, namely, that it always corrects and condemns the wrong. Let the reader think the Bible through, and see that we have stated the bare truth. Good and evil are everywhere either explicitly or implicitly set over against each other, and are never confused or merged.

"If thou doest not well, shalt thou not be accepted?" God

said to Cain. On the eve of the coming of the great flood, God said to Noah: "Come thou and all thy house into the ark: for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation" (Gen. 7:1). And why were the rest of the antediluvians destroyed? Here is the reason, and the only reason given: "The earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted His way upon the earth . . . for the earth is filled with violence" (Gen. 6:11-13). God never treats His subjects abitrarily.

In the decalogue may be found all the fundamental principles of the moral law. Every right principle is enjoined; every wrong principle is prohibited. And this is especially true when this fundamental moral law is restated by our Lord in His Sermon on the Mount, where it is elaborated, heightened and spiritualized, as only He who was the eternal Son of God, the Ultimate Source of all good, was competent to do.

In searching through the Psalms, the Proverbs, and the Prophecies of the Old Testament, we find that in all places the highest moral standard is maintained. Only a few selections need be cited: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. . . . For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish." Next we shall quote a classical passage that critics of the Bible should read and ponder: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall

receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation" (Ps. 24:3-5). Nor is only individual uprightness commended, but also national righteousness: "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34). Our Lord's teaching simply upholds the same lofty standard of moral purity and virility: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." He commended Nathanael, because He saw in him "an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." Passing by hundreds of similar teachings, we read in the Revelation that the inhabitants of heaven "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," and that these white robes are "the righteousness of the saints" (Rev. 7:14; 19:8).

The high standard of morality taught in the Bible adds forcibly to the conviction that the Christian system derived from it is, as respects the profound ethical phenomena of the world, philosophically based.

VII. Inner and Outer Goodness.

A further argument for the depth and all-sidedness of Christianity, and therefore of its philosophic solidity and completeness, may be adduced from the fact that it enjoins everywhere both inner and outer righteousness. It must not be supposed that the Old Testament teaches only external or mere behavioristic goodness. By no means. With the antediluvians it was "every imagination of the heart that was evil, and only evil continually." Note the saying about the patriarch Abraham: "And he believed on the Lord, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." Faith is a matter of the inner life. When the command was given to Israel, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," etc., the inmost part of man's being was challenged

(Deut. 6:5). This is repeated by our Lord (Matt. 22:37-39). The Psalmist prayed thus: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me" (Ps. 51:10; cf. also verses 6, 17).

If there is any difference, the New Testament teaches still more constantly the need of heart purity and sincerity. We cite: "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." Rebuking the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus said: "Ye make clean the outside of the cup and the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. . . . Cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also"; "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in nowise enter into the kingdom of God." Says the apostle: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance"; "I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them."

But outer correct behavior is also proportionately emphasized in Holy Writ. For instance: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8); "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works," etc. "Let us walk honestly as in the day"; "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time"; "Provide things honest in the sight of all men"; "Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men."

This well-poised character of the ethical teaching of the Bible speaks volumes for its basic truthfulness and real divine inspiration. It is hardly probable that the writers of the Bible would have been able, by their own wisdom, to

bring about a consensus of view and conception on so important a theme as the relative value of internal and external righteousness.

VIII. The Ethical Nature of Salvation.

The central doctrine of the Christian system is salvation; it is the conception around which all other ideas revolve. But from what are men to be saved? Primarily from sin, which is the one unethical element in the world. This is precisely the teaching of our source-book: "Thou shalt call His name Jesus." Why? "For He shall save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21).[2] Paul also points out this central fact of Christianity: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. 1:15).

But Christian salvation has more than merely a negative aspect. There is also the positive element. Christ saves men from the unethical unto the ethical, from sin unto righteousness. Indeed, no one is ever justified but that he is also regenerated — that is, a new and holy principle of spiritual life is implanted in his being by the Holy Spirit. Of course, the Holy Spirit would beget no other kind of a life within the regenerate except a *holy* life. The full-toned ethics of salvation is given *in nuce* in this classical statement: "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness" (1 Pet. 2:24). In brief, the whole purpose, as someone has put it, of the coming of the eternal Son of God into the world was "to make bad people good and good people better." Here again we note the depth and thoroughgoing character of the Christian religion. Surely a

[2] The word *Jesus*, traced back to the Hebrew, means Jehovah-Saviour.

system that solves the profound moral problems for mankind deserves to be called a philosophy.

IX. The Ethical Element in the Plan of Redemption.

Here, too, we see the profundity and fundamental character of the Christian religion. Had God forgiven men's sins directly and saved them by a mere fiat, an eternal ethical principle, namely, justice, would have been brushed aside by mere sentimental love. But the divine love is holy love, righteous love, and therefore it will not rudely trample upon the ethical principle of justice, which is an eternal principle with God, and pertains to the very structure of a moral universe.

Having regard to all the ethical elements involved in such an economy, divine love and wisdom found a way by which the just government of the world could be upheld, and by which, at the same time, divine mercy could reach down and save men from sin in an ethical way. This was done through the atoning merit of the Son of God who came to earth in human form. Thus "God could be just, and the justifier of everyone that believeth on Jesus." We may not be able to grasp the meaning of it all, but by this plan no moral schism, no clash of attributes, occurred either in the being of God or in the moral economy of the universe. There was a perfect adjustment and synthesis of all the ethical principles involved.

Thus by looking to the cross of Calvary we see two necessary elements: first, the beneficent love of God in taking our place under the law; second, the enormity of sin, which could be expiated only by the substitutional death and suffering of the Son of God. It is all told in the winsome language of the apostle: "But when the fullness of the time

was come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:4, 5). Another Biblical statement contains the whole gospel from both the spiritual and the ethical viewpoints: "For He hath made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21).

Next, it will be profitable to consider the all-inclusive and nicely balanced character of the practical ethics set forth in the Christian system. It will be seen that all phases of life are duly stressed; there is no one-sided or disproportionate emphasis.

X. The Well-poised Ethical Christian Life.

1. *Man's Threefold Duty.*

There are systems of general ethics that overlook man's first obligations: namely, his duties to God. Christian ethics is not thus deficient. Both Moses and Christ enjoined love to God as the first and greatest commandment. That again is both right and reasonable. It is also consistent with the unitary teaching of the Word of God. Since God is man's Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer, the Ultimate Personality by whom all things subsist and cohere, it is rational to believe that man's primary duty would be to Him. It would be irrational to think otherwise. And this is especially true when we remember what the Scriptures teach about the heavenly Father's anxious interest in His rational creatures: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him" (Ps. 103:13). Referring to the heavenly Father's care of the fowls of the air, Jesus said, "Are ye not of much more value than they?" An apostle writes: "Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you" (1 Pet. 5:7).

The whole Biblical teaching is, indeed, that God is interested in the affairs of the people of the earth, and that He watches over them. Add to these facts, the fact that He sacrificed Himself for man's redemption, and it certainly is indisputably clear and reasonable that our first duty is toward God.

The second commandment, Jesus taught, is like unto the first: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Hence Biblical Christianity recognizes and enjoins our duties to our fellowmen. "None of us liveth unto himself," may be applied in the social sense as well as in the sense required by the context. While it may not be accurate to speak of "the social gospel," for there is only one gospel; yet it is correct to say that there is a large social element in the teaching of Jesus Christ. The parables of the rich man and Lazarus and of the Good Samaritan clearly teach men their obligations to the poor and the unfortunate, and contain a most searching rebuke of selfishness. Our Lord's description of the norm of judgment at the last day includes primarily everybody's treatment of his fellows, particularly those in distress (Matt. 25: 31-46). The gospel of Christ does not overlook or in any way minimize the principle of altruism; it is all-sided. All through her history the church has been aware of this social factor in Christianity, although she has not always practiced it as fully as she should have done, even as she has often been all too neglectful of the first commandment of the law. Even today some people who preach fervently about what they call "the social gospel" expend more time and effort in speech than in action. They are rhetorical social workers.

There is a fine and sane discrimination in the second commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," correlated with the Golden Rule, "Therefore, all things what-

soever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matt. 7:12). Here is the true norm for both egoism and altruism. This principle is in accord with common sense. We have been created self-conscious and sentient persons, and might as well be sensible enough to acknowledge that fact. So constituted, we have no other standard by which to judge how we should treat others except by remembering how we desire them to treat us. How could we decide such a question save by referring it back to our own selfhood! We are trying to show that the gospel of Christ teaches a true and sane doctrine of altruism, not one that is up in the air and utterly utopian. Here again we observe the poised character of Christian morality.

In the last paragraph we have anticipated another clear Biblical teaching, namely, that every man owes duties to himself. The very fact that each man is to love his neighbor *as himself* connotes that truth, for he could not determine his duty to his neighbor if he did not have his own selfhood as a norm. It stands to reason that, since God has given to each man a self-conscious and sentient personality, He will respect that personality; that He appraises each individual as of high worth; that He would not want him to underestimate himself; that it would be a sin against God and a frustration of the divine plan for any man to fail to preserve and develop his own personality. It is also reasonable to believe that, if the other man has value for himself and in God's sight, you and I are of like value, for the other man is no more of a self-conscious and sentient being than are you and I. If a man does not care for himself, he is not likely to care for anyone else. Self-contempt will be likely to breed contempt for others.

Many times it occurs that a man will say, "I owe it to

myself to do so and so. I cannot afford for my own sake to yield to temptation that will do despite to my own selfhood." And he is right. He will then be likely to have the same high regard for the personality of his neighbor. The very fact that we know ourselves proves that we owe duties to ourselves.

The apostle Paul gave expression to a salient thought on this question: "Let every one test his own work; then he will have satisfaction in himself, and not in comparing himself with another; for each one shall bear his own load" (Gal. 6:4, 5; this translation gives Paul's real meaning). There is, according to this teaching, always a point at which each person must bear his own burden of responsibility, so that he can have satisfaction in himself, and not only in other people. Again we recognize the thoroughness and all-inclusive nature of Christian ethics. Duties to God, to one's fellowmen, to oneself — that is the whole sum of every man's obligation.

2. *Permanent and Interim Ethics.*

It has been asserted that Christ's teaching was almost wholly eschatological; that is, that it had little concern for the present life, but was solicitous only for the future life and the imminent second advent of our Lord. Hence the charge that Christianity teaches mere "interim ethics." That would mean a moral life suitable only for the brief period to elapse before the Lord's second coming.[3] We believe this view to be a one-sided interpretation of the teaching of Christ. Bishop D'Arcy puts it well when he says that this

[3] Dr. Albert Schweitzer developed this idea in his striking book, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus.* This conception has been duly criticized by Bishop C. F. D'Arcy in his excellent volume, *Christian Ethics and Modern Thought,* pp. 14, 17, 29, 30. He calls it an "imperfect conception of our Lord's ethical doctrine."

interpretation, "by removing the kingdom altogether from the present order of things makes a fatal separation between the great end of our existence and the duties of everyday life." [4]

The real truth regarding the Christian doctrine is that it includes both the present and the futurist conceptions. The teaching of Christ and His apostles clearly is, that a present, this-worldly order of Christian moral living shall obtain, and that there is to be actual stability about it. As has already been shown on preceding pages, men are not to sit down idly, fold their hands, look for and dream about the second coming of Christ. The servant is to go about his everyday duties, no matter how near may be his Master's return. Other servants are entrusted with talents and pounds with which they are expected to trade and do business in the normal way. The kingdom of God is compared to a mustard seed which is to have time to grow into a tree with spreading branches. The apostles are commissioned to go into all the world to preach the gospel; and surely that would require time, and would, therefore, necessitate a stable moral and spiritual order in this world. Godliness, wrote the apostle, "has promise of the life that now is," as well as "of that which is to come." Yes, the Bible inculcates a stable ethical life and practice for here and now on this mundane planet.

However, if that were the whole sum of Biblical teaching, it would be as narrow and one-sided as the materialistic philosophies of history and of modern times. Men are also admonished to prepare for the future; to watch and pray; to be ready for the Lord's *parousia,* or second coming. And the expectation of a future life and judgment day is to have

[4] *Ibid.,* p. 17.

some influence on the present life. History proves the Bible to be right: men do live more uprightly and more carefully when they know that they are immortal and that the present life will have some vital relation to their future destiny. When men believe only in the brief span of the present life, their motto is likely to be that of the hedonist: "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." The Biblical doctrine is better and broader. An apostle puts it saliently: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John 3:2, 3).

A noted unbeliever once declared that he had "all he could do to take care of one world at a time and so he would take care of the present world and let the future take care of itself." But he should not have judged other men's capacity by his own incapacity. It is a simple fact that many people, many of them quite ordinary mortals, too, from the scholastic viewpoint, are enabled, by the grace of God, to live good, practical, and useful lives here on earth, and at the same time make preparation for the eternal future. Let us not belittle ourselves and cast contempt upon our God-given capabilities. Biblical doctrine displays its finely poised character by including both permanent and interim morality.

3. *The Stalwart and Gentle Virtues.*

Another distinguishing mark of the Christian system is its excellent correlation of the heroic and staunch virtues with those that are kindly and gentle. On this matter the criticisms of both J. S. Mill and Nietzsche are in error.[5]

[5] See D'Arcy, *op. cit.*, pp. 14ff.

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Mill made the charge that Christianity was deficient in inculcating positive duties and announcing positive precepts; that the negative virtues were the only ones that were accentuated. Nietzsche advocated the "transvaluation of values," and slashed vehemently at the ethical principles of Christianity, especially its sentiments of love and mercy. It is hardly necessary to refute this destructive philosopher's charges, but it is worth while to indicate the injustice of Mr. Mill's criticisms.

Looked at in the large and in detail, Christianity, as based on the Bible, inculcates the sturdy virtues. It often requires all the fiber of a strong man's being to practice them. For example, a man cannot be a moral coward (or a physical coward, either, for that matter) and be a good Christian. Is it always easy to be brave and true? Is it always a light task to uphold and defend right principles and practices in the face of a scoffing world? Everyone knows that it requires courage of the first quality to be loyal to truth and principle in all the circumstances of life.

Neither can a man be dishonest and be a follower of Christ. Is it always easy to be honest in business and scrupulous in the statement of the truth? A man cannot be a Christian without being chaste in thought and conduct. Is that always an easy task? Is it not true that many a Christian man has had to resist almost unto blood in order to preserve the integrity of his soul?

Yes, it requires manly principles to be a true disciple of the Master. That may be one reason why many men do not identify themselves with His cause; they feel their moral weakness, and fear they cannot live up to His standards.

There are many sturdy injunctions in the Bible. Jehovah said to Joshua a number of times, "Only be thou strong

and very courageous." The apostle gives bracing advice: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." Also: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." Even the apostle of love rejoiced in virile young manhood, for he wrote: "I write unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one" (1 John 2:14). Thomas Hughes, of Rugby, wrote a stimulating book with the title, *The Manliness of Jesus*, in which he held up the Master as a model for all men of true upstanding character. When Christ drove the money-changers from the temple, He displayed His heroic qualities. He never ran from danger, and never failed to rebuke error.

Yet Christianity also gives a proportionate place to the gentler virtues. Both strength and gentleness find their classical synthesis in the character and conduct of Jesus Christ. He could be terribly stern on occasion. At other times He was the paragon of kindliness and sympathy. Note His considerate treatment of the widow of Nain who had lost her only son; of blind Bartimeus; of the woman taken in adultery and the other woman at the well of Jacob; of the mothers and their little children who came to Him for His blessing. His tender words, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," have been lisped by many of earth's weary ones. And listen again: "Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God and believe in me; in my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you." In Jesus, who is our best example of human living in the world, we perceive the most perfect union of strength and tenderness; He who stilled the tempest wept at the grave of Lazarus, his friend whom He loved.

Perhaps you have seen a young father, a veritable giant of strength, step over to the crib of his firstborn, a tender babe of a few weeks, lift it up in his arms, and press it against his bosom with a mother's tenderness. How easily he might have crushed out its little life! But he didn't! Was it a mark of weakness and unmanliness to exhibit such tender affection? No; you feel that he was all the manlier because he was moved by a father's genuine love.

Our purpose in this chapter has been to show the all-sided and exalted ethics of the Christian religion, and thus vindicate once more its philosophical depth and adequacy.[6]

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[6] Since the foregoing chapter was written and set in type, the author has had the pleasure and privilege of reading a most satisfying and capable evangelical work: namely, *The Ethics of the Gospel and the Ethics of Nature,* by Professor H. H. Scullard, D.D., now deceased. It was published in 1927. In a most effective way it upholds the all-sided moral teaching of the Christian Scriptures, which are everywhere accepted and vindicated by the author as the veritable Word of God. Again and again he points out the untenable positions of the dissecting critics.

CHAPTER XIV

THE RATIONAL BASIS OF THE NEW BIRTH

I. Christianity and Intellectual Culture.

Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night, began the conversation by paying Jesus a compliment. He said: "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him" (John 3:2). But Jesus, apparently, paid no attention to his salutation, but seemed to divert the conversation into another channel by saying: "Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except any one be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).[1]

Of course, there was a logical connection between the statement of Nicodemus and our Lord's reply, which might be phrased in this way: "If you look upon me merely as a Jewish rabbi and a miracle-worker, you have too low a conception of me, that is, a merely external and intellectual one. The only way by which you may come really to understand me and the principles of my kingdom is by being born again."

But Nicodemus was utterly nonplussed by Christ's answer. He exclaimed: "How can a man be born when he

[1] The American Revision says "born anew"; margin, "born from above." In either case it would signify a supernatural event. It should also be remembered that the Greek uses the term *tis*, which means, not "a man," but "any one." So we have translated it literally in the text.

is old?" Jesus did not stop to explain to him the mystery of the new birth, but repeated His previous statement, only in somewhat different phraseology: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except any one be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Then Nicodemus, as it were, "threw up his hands," and exclaimed, "How can these things be?"

This incident leads us to offer some observations on the relation of the Christian religion to intellectual culture. Nicodemus was an educated man. We know this from several circumstances: he was a Pharisee; he was a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin; Jesus called him "a master of Israel." Perhaps he was a graduate of the University of Jerusalem, and may have sat at the feet of teachers like Hillel and Gamaliel. Yet he could not understand what Jesus meant by the new birth.

These facts lead to a further remark: A man might be a highly educated man from the academic viewpoint, a veritable *savant;* and yet might be only an abecedarian in spiritual lore. Someone has put it rather poetically, nevertheless truly, in the following way, which we will not attempt to quote literally, but will express in our language:

A man might be a great astronomer, so that he could talk learnedly about the stars and planets of the heavens and their wonderful movements in the universe; and yet he might not be able to discover "the Star of Bethlehem." A man might be a great botanist, able to speak learnedly about all the flowers, plants and trees, and give their technical scientific names and classifications; and yet he might not be able to identify "the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley." Again, a man might be a great geologist, able to discourse in an erudite way about the rocks and fossils and

the diversified strata of the earth's formation; and yet he might not know how to take his stand on "the Rock of Ages." Once more, a man might be a learned mathematician, competent to solve all the problems of his recondite science; and yet he might not be able to solve the most fundamental and important problem of all, namely: what it would "profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul."

No! history and experience prove that no one can become a Christian by a mere intellectual process. Whether learned or unlearned, men are not made Christians in that way. Christians are made by being "born again."

Sometimes inquiring persons are puzzled over this circumstance. To make the matter concrete, they may put their problem in this form: Here is a very learned man, a veritable Solon, with many scholastic titles attached to his name; yet he does not believe Jesus Christ to be the Saviour of the world and the Bible to be the inspired Word of God. On the other hand, here is another man who is equally erudite, with just as many academic titles appended to his name; yet he is a devout believer in Christ and the Bible. How then, asks the earnest inquirer, are we to decide where great doctors disagree?

We would not chide the questioner because of his mental dilemma; yet his conundrum may be solved in a very simple way: The first man mentioned is not an unbeliever because he is so highly educated in the academic sense, but because he has never been "born again." The other man in this comparison is not a believer because of his great intellectual acquisitions, but because he has had the experience of the "new birth." That experience, and that alone, makes the difference between the believer and the unbeliever, the Christian person and the worldling.

It may be said that these are purely dogmatic statements. Thus far, we grant, they may seem to be so; but they are based on reasonable premises. Suppose our religion depended on erudition and long-drawn and minute historical and scientific investigations, then the vast majority of people never could become Christians. Yet many of the best and most useful Christian people we have known have never attended a college or a university; have never, so to speak, brushed their clothes against academic walls. A religion that is meant to be universal, as the Christian religion certainly is, should be available to everybody. The Christian religion *is* available; for every person, lettered or unlettered, can, if he will, come to God in the name of Christ through the narrow gateway of repentance and faith, and receive the experience of regeneration by the Holy Spirit. It is not a difficult or complex or protracted process.

Yet this method does, be it frankly said, demand humility and submission. That requirement, however, is reasonable; for a docile attitude of mind is necessary in the presence of all truth, no matter to what realm it may belong. If you go into a chemical or physical laboratory to discover facts regarding the composition and activity of matter, you must investigate in a humble and teachable spirit. You must submit to the physical conditions. The same truth obtains in the laboratory of spiritual experience.

On this fundamental principle are based several elementary statements of the Bible. "The way of salvation," says the prophet, "is so plain that the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein" (Isa. 35:8). "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth," said Jesus, "that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and the prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight" (Matt. 11:25, 26). What a ten-

der, yet rationally fundamental, statement! Paul teaches the same doctrine. "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21). Again: "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (1 Cor. 3:19).

All this teaching is just as it should be to meet the universal human need for a clear assurance of truth and salvation. Nor is the foregoing statement of the Christian way of salvation in the least measure to be construed as a belittling of education and intellectual culture. The world needs educated men and women to bring to it many of the necessities and amenities of our physical, social, and spiritual existence; to open up the precious treasures of knowledge; to vindicate cogently and convincingly "the ways of God to man," especially in His beneficent revelation through Jesus Christ and in the Holy Scriptures. Yes; the Christian religion is the friend of intellectual culture, even while it proves itself sane and well-balanced by refusing to overstress it and make unreasonable demands upon it.

II. Definition of the New Birth.

1. *A Simple Statement.*

The definition of regeneration,[2] which is the theological term for the new birth, need not be made difficult or abstruse. It may be very simply stated in this way: Regeneration is the implanting, by the Holy Spirit, of the principles of a new spiritual life in the human soul. The result is that the divine image in man, lost through Adam's fall, is restored, and thus man again becomes *en rapport* with God. Surely this is so reasonable a doctrine that one feels it ought to be true.

[2] Lat., *re* and *generare*, to beget; *regeneratio*, the state of being reborn.

The process of regeneration might be illustrated from the physical realm; for, as Henry Drummond was wont to say, there is "physical law in the spiritual realm." We might, however, reverse the order by phrasing it: "Spiritual law in the physical realm." As the cosmos is a unitary system, it is reasonable to believe that in many respects the same laws hold in all realms.

Our illustration is this: Suppose you own a plot of ground in the rear part of your yard, and wish to convert it into a garden. In its natural state it is overgrown with weeds and thorns and thistles and infested with noxious vermin. What method of garden-making will you pursue? You will dig up and cast forth the weeds, thorns and thistles, drive out or kill off the infesting vermin, break up the hard soil and harrow it thoroughly, until you have converted it into a fine tilth. Then what is your next step? You certainly do not let it lie fallow. You carefully plant in the mellowed soil some valuable seeds. Then the sunshine warms them, the bland winds blow over them, the dews of heaven moisten them; they begin to germinate, then unfold, break through the surface of the soil, and continue to grow, until presently you have a beautiful flower or vegetable garden.

In that way, precisely, the new life is begotten in the soul. Through the law the foreign growths are uprooted and cast away, the corrupt creatures removed; then the soil is broken up by begetting repentance, contrition, sorrow for sin and desire for salvation. At this point the new vital spiritual principle is planted in the receptive soul; and that divine act constitutes regeneration. The result or fruitage of the new birth is the ability to exercise active faith in Christ as the Saviour, bringing justification on God's part and the beginning of sanctification on the believer's part. This last

is a progressive work of grace, and is furthered by the correlation of the divine will and the renewed (regenerated) human will. In this way the believing soul (to keep up the figure) is converted into a beautiful and useful "garden of the Lord," which may be said to "blossom as the rose." To possess such a heart-garden ought to be the earnest desire of every individual.

2. *A Statement in Psychological Terms.*

It may be objected that our argument is based on imagery; that it is simply founded on an illustration from the physical realm, and that proves nothing. "The explanation is not sufficiently psychological," says the objector.

Then let us apply psychology. Just as an external object, say a tree, through the well-known optical and physiological media, carries a stimulus back to the center of consciousness in the cortex of the brain, and there meets with the corresponding response in the self-conscious mind, so that the person says, "I see a tree out yonder on the campus"; just so the Holy Spirit, through the medium of the law and the gospel, whether read, heard, or otherwise made known, carries a spiritual stimulus to the soul and creates within it new powers and perceptions, which in turn enable it to react to the gracious appeal in sequential and corresponding ways. That is the psychology of Christian conversion. In this mediated process and experience, theology and psychology meet and integrate; one might almost say, meet and embrace each other. Between them has been established a true *modus vivendi.*

III. The Necessity of the New Birth.

1. *Our Lord's Positive Language.*

On the need of the birth from above our Lord spoke in

a most positive tone. He preceded each statement by His solemn and impressive, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee." Then He added: "Marvel not that I say unto thee, Ye must be born again."

2. *A Categorical Imperative.*

One might put it briefly in this way: we must be born again because we *must!* Why must we breathe the air and eat nutritious food in order to live? Because we *must!* That regimen lies in the very structure of things. There are many categorical imperatives in this world besides Immanuel Kant's categorical moral imperative. That is, there are many *musts.*

It is not necessary, however, to state the matter in so dogmatic a way. In the moral and spiritual realm there is always a rational basis for any imperative regimen. A noted unbeliever of the preceding century was wont to become hilarious in this way: "These Christian people," he said, "with all their preachers and theologians, are a crude lot: they declare that we have been born all wrong the first time, and so must be born all over again!" And this speech was regarded as an occasion for laughter!

But it certainly was a superficial criticism. Cannot everybody see that there is something radically wrong with human nature? Why all the wickedness in the world if human nature is all right in its natural state? Why the recent World War? Why all the departures from the moral standard? And, most of all, why this awful pall of spiritual indifference the whole world over? To attribute it to environment is simply to raise the question, Why is the environment invariably bad? The trouble lies deeper. Man is not born a *tabula rasa.* He has resting upon him in his natural birth the terrible entail of depravity.

The Psalmist was a better analyst of human nature than was the scoffing infidel; for the Psalmist said: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. 51:5). Paul proved himself better versed in anthropology, for he wrote: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them; for they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14). Again he scored deeply: "The carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7). Our Lord, in His interview with Nicodemus, told the whole sad-glad story: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh: that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6).

3. *The Law of Biogenesis.*

Here, then, the secret is revealed; the riddle is unravelled. Men must be born again because they are not born right the first time. Having been conceived and born in sin, and therefore born with the unspiritual mind, how can they be made spiritually minded except by a new birth — except the Holy Spirit implant in them something which they do not possess by natural generation? At this point the scientific law of biogenesis enters in with its categorical imperative: Life comes only from antecedent life — a law that is recognized by all biologists who stay by the facts. *Omne vivum ex vivo.* So the unspiritual mind cannot evolve, by its own resident powers, into a spiritual state and experience, because the "resident powers" are not there. Nothing can come from nothing. Hence we must recognize and submit to the imperative of our Lord when He says, "Ye must be born again."

4. *Individual Certification Needed.*

There is still another element in the *rationale* of the new

birth. Since, as has been previously shown, a special revelation was needed, and therefore God gave it, and saw to it that it was recorded in the Bible, and thus given to the world in general, it is reasonable to believe that God would institute a method by which each person might receive an inner certification for himself that this professed revelation is true. Any other way would certainly be incomplete and nonconsequential; in fact, it would be absurd.

Now, the new birth is bestowed for the very purpose of giving to the individual the personal assurance of salvation and truth. Thus we see how perfectly the various parts of the Christian system integrate. It is charged with rationality. It is a complete philosophy.

IV. The Divine Agent in Regeneration.

There is also a notable consistency in the fact that it is the Holy Spirit who begets this good and gracious work in the human soul. Several reasons for this may be assigned.

1. *The Cause Not Subjective.*

The spiritual life, being a new given power, cannot arise from the content of the human mind in itself. It cannot spring up from the content of the so-called "subconscious mind." Such content is not there; if there is anything there, it is man's legacy of depravity from the fall of Adam. No one who has been converted in the Christian way has ever attributed his experience to any force within himself. The chief element in the content of Christian experience is that it comes into the soul from a power outside of itself.

2. *The Agent Divine.*

There is still this additional element in such an experience — that it is begotten of God. No converted person ever ascribes it to any other source. It is known to be a

divine operation by the subject himself. And this is true, no matter how unspiritual and agnostical, or even atheistic, the person may have been prior to his conversion. Therefore, the Holy Spirit, being one of the persons of the Triune God, imparts the divine element in this experience. Thus, and only thus, can it be adequately explained.

3. *The Specific Work of the Holy Spirit*

There is also rational congruity in the fact that it is the special function of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity to perform this work of grace in the human soul. Each divine person performs His specific share in the plan of redemption, just as if it were all purposely arranged in logical order. The Father sends the Son into the world, and sustains Him during His period of voluntary self-renunciation; the Son comes into the world, becomes incarnate, and takes the burdens of mankind upon Himself on the cross, thus making expiation for sin; now the Holy Spirit's office is to apply the objective redemption thus wrought by the Son to the individual soul, bringing to it a subjective experience of its truth and saving power.

Not only so, but the Holy Spirit is the innermost psychical element or person in the Holy Trinity; He is that person who unites Father and Son in a blessed union of self-consciousness and fellowship; therefore, it is in harmony with the nature of a psychical and spiritual experience that the Holy Spirit should perform the innermost work within the soul, that of regeneration. There is a remarkable Pauline statement which seems to indicate this deep, searching work of the Holy Spirit. Speaking of the things which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard," etc., Paul adds: "But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God; for what

man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2:10, 11). The most subjective Person of the Trinity logically performs the subjective office in us.

V. The Means Employed.

The Holy Spirit employs *means* in accomplishing the work of grace within men's souls. He does not come down in any kind of a way out of the blue. The chief divinely appointed instrumentality He uses is the Word of God. He does not work an evangelical experience except through the Law and the Gospel as given in the Bible. If we did not have the Bible, we would not even know of Christ and the redemption He wrought for us. We would not know that God will pardon, justify, and save us on the condition of our accepting Christ as our Lord and Saviour.

But this valuable safeguarding truth is known, not through human wisdom, but through the special revelation given in the Scriptures; for while they teach that we are "born of God," and "born of the Spirit," they also teach that we are "born by (through) the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever" (1 Pet. 1:23). Paul agrees with this: "How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? . . . So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10:14-17).

Here again let us reflect upon the *rationale* of this divinely appointed process. We have already discussed the rational basis of a special divine revelation and God's normal action in putting the record of it in a book, namely, the Bible. Now, as the Holy Spirit always uses the Word as His means of conversion and sanctification, He ever keeps

His people true to "the deposit of faith"; in other words, to "the faith once for all delivered unto the saints." Thus the Holy Spirit and the testimony of the Word always agree, and the Christian always knows what the true doctrine is.

The Holy Spirit's employment of the Canonical Scriptures as His instrument in conferring grace saves the evangelical church from two sapping and serious errors or heresies: rationalism, on the one hand, and false mysticism (illuminism), on the other. The first makes human reason, instead of the Holy Scriptures, the norm; the other places the "inner light" above the Scriptures. Regarded historically, both of these heresies have been destructive of the Christian faith, and have led to spiritual indeterminism and often landed their adherents in spiritual darkness. The only effective safeguard against error is loyalty to the Word of God. Again the Christian regimen is proven to be reasonable — a divine philosophy.

VI. The Mystery of the New Birth.

There is no need to stumble over the mystery of the spiritual process known as regeneration. Jesus wisely said to His interlocutor: "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." Then as an analogy He referred to "the wind which bloweth where it listeth," but is understood by no one.

There are people who do not want to accept what they cannot understand; but in view of all the mysteries with which we are surrounded, that is not a reasonable attitude to assume. No one knows what matter and mind are, nor how they are correlated in the human brain to produce self-conscious thought, emotion and volition. Who can get a clear conception of force, electricity, magnetism, time, space,

eternity, infinity? These are all inexplicable mysteries. Yet we do not on that account deny their reality.

So with regard to the operation of the Holy Spirit within our psychology; we do not need to understand it; we need only to *experience* it; then we shall know it to be a reality. While this experience is an inner psychical one, it makes its impact upon the same center of self-consciousness as do our sense impressions, and so it is just as clearly attested.

VII. Unity and Diversity in the New Birth.

The truth of the above subhead will be clarified in a Pauline statement: "There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God who worketh all in all" (1 Cor. 12:6). In every case of true spiritual regeneration, it is wrought by the Holy Spirit through the medium of the Word of God. Here is a sacred unity in all Christian experience. But the Spirit comes to different individuals in various ways. Herein lies a beautiful diversity. Diversity of condition, circumstance, and temperament result in diversity in the manner in which the experience comes.

At this place our Lord's imagery is most apropos. He illustrated His thesis by the wind blowing where it listeth. The wind does not always blow in the same way. Sometimes it blows a hurricane or a cyclone. Some people's experience of conversion comes in that way; it is sudden and revolutionary, resulting in great clarity as to time, place, main content, and other details. Such was the experience of Paul, Augustine, John Newton, Rowland Hill, John Bunyan, Jerry McAuley, and many others.

However, the wind does not always, nor even usually, blow with violence. Often it blows a gentle breeze or zephyr and softly fans your cheek. No doubt there are many conversions of the zephyr-like description. The Holy Spirit

breathes upon some persons in a more gentle way. This is apt to be the case in children's conversions. Some of the best Christians we have ever known have described their experience in practically this way: "We cannot recall the exact time and place when we were converted, for we cannot remember the time when we did not trust and love the Lord Jesus Christ."

No doubt such persons were converted in their childhood, perhaps at their mother's knee, and have never lost their faith in their Lord. The experience of it came to them more gradually and gently than would the experience of an adult person who was somewhat suddenly convicted and converted after following a course of sin.

Paul, although he himself had the more revolutionary experience, recognized the genuineness of Timothy's more childlike experience, for he wrote thus to Timothy: "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child[3] thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:14, 15).

To sum up, the Christian system is coherent, complete, and effectual. Man was created in the divine image, and therefore in a state of moral and spiritual integrity; through the abuse of his freedom he sinned, and thus lost the divine image, rendering himself an alien from the life of God; in the fullness of time God sent His Son to redeem His fallen creatures, thus removing all the judicial obstacles in the way of his salvation; then the Holy Spirit came to apply the objective redemption wrought by the active and passive obedience of the incarnate Son of God, to regenerate man,

[3] Greek, a babe.

to create saving faith in his soul, restore the divine image in him, to give him inner certification of truth and salvation, and thus bring him back into holy and happy fellowship with his Creator. Is not that a complete system and a rational philosophy? If it were generally accepted, and were permitted to be an energizing moral and spiritual force in men's lives, human hearts would be stabilized and comforted, and the race would advance rapidly in true civilization. Then, too, the perplexed minds of men would experience the divine solution of their fundamental problems.

Nor would such peace of mind in any way or measure curtail men's activities and researches, but would turn them into other and more fruitful channels, because then men's souls would be at peace, "in tune with the infinite." And so for everyone the great and satisfying experience of the apostle would be realized: "Godliness with contentment is great gain."

CHAPTER XV

THE FUNCTION OF CHRISTIAN FAITH

I. Christianity a Religion of Faith.

To put it sententiously, Christianity is a faith-religion; the Bible is a faith-book. Perhaps no other religion in the world makes so much of faith; no other places it so integrally in the very structure of its system. It hardly seems to be necessary to cite prooftexts on this point, yet it may be profitable to cite a few.[1]

In the Old Testament we read: "And Abraham believed in the Lord, and He counted it unto him for righteousness." This passage is cited by Paul (Rom. 4:3 and Gal. 3:6). When Job's wife became discouraged on account of the afflictions visited upon him and his household, and bade him "curse God and die," he replied: "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" Afterward he said: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Had Job lost his faith, we should not today have the greatest religious epic ever composed.

Again and again in the Psalms men are exhorted to trust in the Lord. For example: "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man; it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes"; "They that

[1] We need not locate all these passages; for anyone, with the use of a Bible concordance, can check them for himself.

trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever." Isaiah strikes the same chord: "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He is become my salvation."

The New Testament testimony agrees with that of the Old, proving once more the divine unity of the Scriptures. At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus' first text was: "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." Elsewhere He said: "Even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish, but have everlasting life." He would do no wonderful works if there was not the response of faith. "According to thy faith, so be it unto thee," fell from His lips. Also: "Thy faith hath made thee whole." These are certainly comforting words: "Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God and believe in me." [2] More than once Christ reproached His disciples and others because of their lack of faith. Rebuking the Pharisees, He said: "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" After He had commissioned His apostles to go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation, He added these significant words: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: he that believeth not shall be condemned."

The same refrain runs through the rest of the New Testament. Paul, quoting an Old Testament prophet, gives us this familiar saying, "The just shall live by faith." The following suggestive texts are from Paul: "Therefore, be-

[2] The author believes that he has here given the correct translation of Jesus' words.

ing justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"; "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God"; "For we walk by faith, not by sight"; "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

St. John, the apostle of love, lays no less emphasis on faith, saying: "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

We conclude our Biblical citations by appealing to the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, which may be called the "great faith-chapter of the Bible." The first verse gives a concise description of the illuminating effects of faith: "Now faith is the reality of things hoped for, the proof of things not seen." [3] The philosophy of this profound passage may be explicated in this way: The things that are only hoped for become realities through Christian faith. For example, a man may be an agnostic. He may hope that there is a God, but he cannot be sure; his intellectual processes lead him into uncertainty; but the moment he comes to Christ and accepts Him by faith, that which was previously only hoped for becomes a reality to Him; for Jesus said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me." Through faith in Christ he is cured of his agnosticism. In the same way faith furnishes the proof of things not seen. We cannot see God, nor the Holy Spirit, nor spiritual things; but when we accept Jesus Christ by faith, we receive the inner assurance and proof of their reality; for then we can say with the apostle: "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." We cannot help thinking that Heb. 11:1

[3] This is a direct literal translation.

was divinely imparted to the writer, else he never would have been able to express so fundamental a truth — a truth that has been verified in the experiences of millions of Christian believers.

In this same pregnant chapter of Hebrews we read: "But without faith it is impossible to please God, for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." In this same chapter the roster of the Old Testament heroes of faith is called, and it is shown that through faith they accomplished their great works. It rings like an anvil chorus. "By faith," it says, "Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain"; by faith Enoch was translated so that he should not see death; by faith Noah built the ark, and thereby saved the human race from perishing; by faith Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Barak, Gideon, Samuel, David, and others, conquered and achieved and were saved; and then the writer brings his eloquent encomium on faith to a grand climax in the first two verses of the next chapter, by saying: "Wherefore, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race which is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."

So far the Holy Scriptures. Now, after many years of study, thought and experience, we have made this discovery: Whenever the Bible stresses something so persistently, we may rely upon it that it is a matter of paramount importance; something foundational; something which lies in the very structure of things as they are. Therefore we hold that faith must have a real philosophical basis. Let us see whether we can make good this proposition. But first we must define faith.

II. Definition of Christian Faith.

As good a definition as we know is the following: "Christian faith is personal trust in the Lord Jesus Christ alone for salvation." [4] No addition to this definition needs to be made except to say that, if a person trusts in Christ for his salvation, he will trust Him for everything else.

This definition is acceptable because of its simplicity. No long and difficult theological terms are needed to define Christian faith. Everybody, whether young or old, learned or unlearned, can understand what it is. The word *trust* is rightly used as a synonym of faith. Everyone knows what trust is. We know when we trust people and when we do not trust them. Even a child of tender years knows when it trusts a person and when it does not. The writer once visited in the home of a fellow-minister. After greeting the parents, he desired to make friends with their little child. But she shrank from him, and took refuge behind her mother. She was not sure that she could trust the stranger who had entered the home; and he had to conduct himself properly for some time before she was willing to trust him and become free and friendly. This teaches us the simplicity of faith in Jesus Christ. It is simply trusting Him.

The attractive feature about this regimen is this, that one may and does know when he trusts Christ alone for his salvation. And to have this experience of trust is one of the best inner tokens that the Holy Spirit has done His office work, that of regeneration, in the heart. How do I know that I have been truly converted? By knowing that I trust in Christ alone for my salvation. For says the apostle on this very point: "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. 12:3). With this agrees

[4] This definition is quoted almost literally from an American edition of Luther's Small Catechism.

the teaching of our Lord; for when Peter confessed Him by saying, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus commended him in these striking words: "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 16: 16, 17). With these passages we may collate another relevant one: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself" (1 John 5:10).

III. Erroneous Ideas of Christian Faith.

1. *It is Not Blind Credulity.*

It is to be regretted that some persons outside of the Christian church cherish mistaken notions regarding Christian faith. Their idea is that it is mere blind credulity, based on ignorance and superstition. We do not say it in anger, but only in sorrow, that the unbelievers of this country and other lands, whether they are known as infidels, secularists, rationalists, or free-thinkers, offer as their stock in trade the charge that Christian people are ignorant and gullible, and often downright dishonest. Having read much of their literature, we must say that you can hardly find a line of their writings that is not animated by a bitter and scornful spirit. It is seldom, indeed, that an infidel treats Christian believers with any respect and courtesy, or deals with Christians in a judicial temper.

Sometimes a disparaging comparison like the following is made by unbelievers: Christian people are like a nestful of callow young robins; you may touch the rim of their nest ever so lightly, when every little golden-lined mouth will fly open, and they will swallow anything that is put into them. This simile — intended, doubtless, as a bit of humor — is sometimes applied to the people who sit in the pew, who are represented as sitting with gaping mouths,

ready to gulp down unquestioningly anything that their preachers have a mind to put into them.

We must protest, however, that this kind of scoffing at Christian people is a mistake — one that is inexcusable. As a matter of fact, most preachers are inclined to think their congregations are more critical than necessary. Have the infidels never heard of the people who "pick the preacher and his sermon to pieces" after the service is concluded and they get beyond earshot of the minister? Yes, there is far more criticism than is right, even by church members themselves. However, many auditors in a church service are intelligent enough to know when the preacher proclaims the truth; also when he makes a mistake, or strikes a false note in his sermon. When the writer was a young minister, a farmer parishioner once corrected his theology; and after the preacher had investigated the matter more fully, he became convinced that the farmer was right. That Christian farmer could hardly have been likened to a young robin still in its avian nursery!

2. *Who has Established Colleges and Universities?*

The Christian person should treat everybody kindly; he should cherish no feeling of resentment; still, one might well ask how it occurs that infidels, if they have such superior knowledge and culture, have established no great colleges and universities in this country, and are not even now, as an organization, sustaining any; while the institutions of higher education established and carried on by the Christian church are found in all sections of the land. Where is there a first-class liberal arts college that has been founded and is now carried on by organized infidelity? How do these facts comport with the boasted superiority of infidels and their allegation that Christian people are a crass and ignorant class?

It is true, infidels sometimes find their way into the colleges of the Christian church, and try to undermine her doctrines and principles; but that can hardly be said to be an ethical procedure. The point is that the Christian church has founded many colleges and universities, while organized infidelity has founded none. It should also be said that the colleges of the Christian church cultivate the highest and most all-round scholarship, including language, history, science, literature, psychology, philosophy, and many other useful disciplines. Let unbelievers examine the curricula of the Christian colleges, and see for themselves that they afford the basis and means of a broad and generous culture.

Thus we must needs deny the charge that Christian faith is mere gullibility based on ignorance. Indeed, that cannot be true in view of the fact that so many highly educated people, bearing scholastic degrees from the best universities of this land and other countries, are devout and earnest believers. Personally we know many great scholars who accept Christ as the Redeemer of the world and the Bible as the inspired Word of God. How could people of culture be afflicted with blind credulity? How could they be imposed on by designing men?

3. *How Faith is Begotten.*

Furthermore, Christian faith cannot be mere credulity, because it is an ability that is begotten in the soul by the Holy Spirit. We have already quoted the saying of Paul: "No man can call Jesus the Lord but by the Holy Ghost." With this accords another saying of the same apostle: "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). In this verse "the gift of God" must refer to faith. But the Holy Spirit

would not beget blind credulity in a man, and then give him an inner assurance of truth, pardon and salvation.

4. *Biblical Cautions Against Credulity.*

The Scriptures themselves caution men to be wise and discriminating, and not too ready to believe. Christ warned His followers by saying, "Take heed what ye hear," and, "Take heed how ye hear." He also warned them against false prophets, who would come to them "in sheep's clothing while inwardly they were ravening wolves" (Matt. 7:15). Paul also gives precautionary advice: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. 5:21). That surely does not encourage indiscriminate belief. Then we have the same warning from St. John: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).

5. *Summation of the Argument.*

The whole argument may be summed up in this way: The person who alleges Christian faith to be mere credulity proves, by that very token, that he has never had the experience which comes to the soul through believing on Jesus Christ, and therefore is hardly competent to pronounce judgment upon it. A Christian experience, begotten by the Holy Spirit and mediated through faith in Jesus Christ, is something that is just as clearly impinged upon the consciousness of the believer as are the experiences that come through the senses or in any other way.

IV. The Reasonableness of Christian Faith.

1. *Why it is Vital in the Christian Religion.*

Faith belongs natively to the Christian religion. It is integral and indigenous there. Without it the Christian re-

ligion would be neither Christian nor religious. A little thought will make this point clear. Christ came into the world to make expiation for men's sins. The Holy Spirit's function is to prepare men's minds for the reception of the salvation thus objectively wrought by the Saviour.

But neither Christ nor the Holy Spirit will *force* salvation upon the individual. In fact, such an idea would be absurd; for sin is something that lies in the will and emotions of man, and so he cannot be saved from it unless he is willing to be saved. If an attempt were made to coerce man and force salvation upon him, he still would not truly be saved, because sin would still remain in his will and he would still love its pleasures.

Again, Christian salvation is the gift of God — a most gracious gratuity. But a gift is no gift, in the proper sense of the term, if it is forced upon a person. To make it a true gift it must be freely given and gladly received. So if God comes with His gratuity, man must accept it, and that means that he must take it by faith. It might be said that faith is the hand of the soul stretched forth to receive the gift of God's pardon and salvation.

Moreover, the Christian religion is both spiritual and ethical. It is ethico-spiritual. But if it were made a matter of coercion, it would be neither; it would be mechanical. Man would then be treated like a robot instead of like a moral and personal being with freedom of choice.

2. *The Psychology of Faith.*

The question might be raised: What is the psychological process in this spiritual transaction? It is not difficult to grasp. The Holy Spirit comes to the man in sin through what is known as the call or vocation, and awakens him to his condition. To put it in psychological phrase, we might

say: "The Holy Spirit carries the stimulus to the mind; then the mind responds by coming to a consciousness of its condition. Such a disturbance of his state of carnal security is necessary if he is to be saved, precisely as, if a man were sound asleep and in imminent peril, he would have to be awakened before his friend could do him any service. In the next place, the Holy Spirit through the law illumines the sinner, making him conscious of his undone and sinful condition. "For through the law cometh the knowledge of sin"; "I had not known sin except through the law." Then through the gospel the Holy Spirit enlightens the sinner as to the offer and method of salvation, namely, through Jesus Christ, who died and rose for him.

But the man is not yet able to believe actively on Christ at this point; therefore, if he is penitent and unresisting — a condition that might be called passive faith, or the faith of complete surrender — the Holy Spirit begets a new spiritual life within him, by which he is enabled, through his newly begotten powers, to exercise faith actively in Jesus Christ. The moment he thus accepts Christ by simple faith, he is justified in the sight of God; his sins are pardoned, and he is saved from their power, for the sake of Him who made expiation for them on the cross.

By this process we note that the Holy Spirit begets in the non-resisting soul the ability of faith, and then the subject must use that ability, just as he must use any other ability divinely conferred upon him. God enables the sinner to repent, but God does not repent for him. So God enables him to believe, but God does not do the believing for him. It is all consistently psychological; at the same time, it is a marvelous supernatural work, because the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God. From this viewpoint, therefore, we are able to see the vital

and rational place of faith in the Christian system. Here theology and psychology blend into a coherent synthesis.

3. *Why God is Pleased with Faith.*

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews says, "Without faith is it impossible to please Him" (God). But why is faith pleasing to God? This will be made clear. Let us remember that, since God created man in His own image, there are some respects in which God is like man. So we would answer the foregoing question in this way: God is pleased with faith because He wants to be trusted. Do not you and I want to be trusted? If people question our motives and good will, are we not grieved? And the more we try to be honest, the more it pains us for someone to call our probity in question. The inveterate liar may not feel greatly disturbed if he is called by that name a few times more or less, but the honest man does not want to be called by that opprobrious epithet even once in a lifetime. That being so, it is reasonable to believe that God is pleased when we trust Him, and that He must be grieved and displeased when we treat Him as if He were a falsifier. Nothing pleases Him more than for you and me to say: "Father, I lay my hand in thine; lead thou me in the way that I should go."

We should also remember that God looks upon the heart. He does not look merely upon the outward appearance. "Every way of man is right in his own eyes; but Jehovah weigheth the hearts" (Prov. 21:2; Amer. Rev.). The King James version says "pondereth." But whether the original means "pondereth" or "weigheth," the divine inspection is intimate and complete. Well may we ask, then, whether the condition of the inner self makes no difference to God. Could He be satisfied with mere external service, while the

heart is far from Him? If He inspects the heart, can He be pleased if He finds it filled with doubt, suspicion and rebellion? On the other hand, He must surely look with complacency upon the heart that trusts, and therefore loves, Him. Again we see the rationality of faith in God.

4. *Trusting the Ultimate and Absolute Reality.*

In a previous chapter we have seen that there must be such a Reality, because, since there is something now, there must have always been something. We also found that the Ultimate Reality must be a Person, or else persons, such as we human beings are, never could have come into existence.

Now, what is more rational than that men should put their dependence on that which is ultimate, self-existent, and absolute? So many people live dissatisfied lives. "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel" (Gen. 49:4). Such persons are "like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed." They are "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine." What is the reason? Because they put their trust in mutable things. The only way to live a stabilized life is to place your confidence in the immutable One, the One who is the "same yesterday, today, and forevermore" (Heb. 13:8); the One "who inhabiteth eternity" (Isa. 59:15); the One who is "from everlasting" (Ps. 90: 2).

Someone has said, "Hitch your wagon to a star." The meaning is that men should have high aims. They may not be able to reach their goal or ideal, but they will attain to higher achievements than if their objective is low. Thus the purpose of the epigram is well-meant. Yet we believe that it is capable of emendation. We fain would put it in this way: Do not hitch your wagon — that is your life — to a star, but to the God who made the star, and who made

all the stars, and then you will be able to live a steady, undaunted and purposeful life. If there is a best to attain, then the well-known adage is true, that "the good and the better are the enemies of the best."

5. *How Faith Hallows Human Relations.*

There is something *intrinsically* good about faith, and something *intrinsically* evil about doubt. When we carry this principle into human life, we see how true it is. Wherever people can safely trust one another, the normal status prevails. Whenever people do or must suspect one another, it connotes that something abnormal has occurred. If there were no dishonest people in the world, we could trust everybody. We would not need lock our doors. But the very fact that we cannot trust everybody connotes the presence of sin: and sin is the abnormal and turbulent factor in the universe.

When the child trusts its mother, that implies the right and normal condition. If the child cries out with affright and shrinks back with terror every time its mother approaches it, such conduct proves that there is something radically wrong with either the mother or the child, or with both. The happiest place on earth is the home in which perfect confidence and love exist between husband and wife. The most wretched place on earth is the home in which suspicion and distrust have crept between husband and wife; the home that has been rent and broken by the entrance of the "eternal triangle."

This being true, it would seem that, reasoning by analogy, the normal relation between man and God would be that of trust. To believe in the Infinite, and to be in tune with the Infinite — surely that seems to be the most rational status of man. Therefore, when Christianity makes faith the con-

dition of salvation and joy and peace, it proves once more its fundamental and rational character. Yes, faith in the holy and redeeming God of the Bible is a most rational act of the human soul.

6. *The Relation of Faith to Grace.*

There is still another profound reason why salvation is mediated through faith, or is conferred on condition of faith. What is faith? It is the only faculty of the soul which simply receives gratuities, but which contributes nothing in return. It might be said to be the receptive faculty of the mind. If men were justified by love, they would contribute something to their salvation, and therefore it would not be solely by grace. If they were justified by their works or activities, they would also contribute something, and therefore would be partly saved by human merit. But when they accept the divine benefactions by faith, they simply receive them; therefore they contribute nothing, but receive everything. Faith is simply *taking God's gift of salvation.* Therefore, there is no merit in faith. Thus God, knowing man's psychology, consistently chose the proper human faculty through which to bestow His gratuity. Here again we see the fine coherence between theology and psychology in the divine plan of redeeming grace.

Paul was fully aware of the fundamental truth just set forth; for he wrote: "For this cause it is of faith that it might be according to grace" (Rom. 4:16). In Paul's rugged and abridged Greek, it would literally be: "For this cause from faith that according to grace." In the English idiom, the missing words are easily supplied. Again he says: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8, 9). Here we prefer to

follow the King James version. In making the human medium or condition through which salvation is bestowed, the Christian system again proves its marvelous coherency.

7. *The "Twice-born Men" of Faith.*

The vital character of faith is proven by the transfigured lives it has produced. "By faith" great things have been wrought. To speak technically, however, it is not faith itself that accomplishes these great results, because faith simply means trust in the power of God. It is God who, on condition of faith in Him, performs the great deeds. Yet, by the use of the figure of speech known as metonymy, we often attribute to faith itself what God does through faith, or on condition of faith (*propter Christum per fidem*).

Treated in this way, let us consider the victories of faith. How many men have been entirely transformed in life and character through faith in Jesus Christ! Take the case of the apostle Paul. A bitter persecutor before he met Christ; a humble follower of Him and lover of all mankind after he accepted Christ by faith. How will unbelievers account adequately for the conversion of Paul? They cannot. The only sufficient explanation of Paul's remarkable change of attitude and spirit is, that Christ is what He proclaimed Himself to be, the Saviour of the world.

Justin Martyr before his conversion was a heathen philosopher. He went from one human philosophy to another to find truth and satisfaction, but found none. Then a Christian disciple directed him to the philosophy of Christ. He accepted Him, and became one of the renowned apologists of the early Christian centuries, and at last laid down his life as a martyr to his convictions of the truth.

Time would fail to tell of Augustine, Bernard of Clair-

vaux, Anselm, Luther, Knox, Latimer, John Newton, Rowland Hill, John Bunyan, Charles Spurgeon, Jerry McAuley, and many hundreds of other "twice-born" men. If Christianity is false, how shall we account for its salutary effects on the men who truly embrace it? Can such good fruit grow on a corrupt tree? "Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?" It is inconceivable.

On the other hand, what has doubt accomplished in lifting people from low levels of life to higher planes? How many transformed lives can it reckon to its credit? Can it produce any? Call the roll of the opponents of Christianity from Celsus, Porphyry, and Lucian down to the latest skeptical free-thinkers, and can you point to one person who has been rescued from a life of sin to a life of virtue and purity through their influence and that of their writings? No; faith is constructive; doubt is destructive. Faith is positive, doubt is negative.

He who desires to live a joyful and victorious life, let him have faith — faith in God, in Christ, and in the Bible as God's revealing Word. Suppose we permit ourselves to drift into doubt, what then? Will it help us to solve any of our fundamental problems? If so, which ones? Will doubt tell us whence we have come, why we are here, whither we are going? Nay, rather, will it not envelop us in Cimmerian darkness?

We have met many doubters — no doubt they were honest doubters. We accuse no one of evil motives. But we have never met any who were happy and contented. We have met many Christians, and in numberless cases have found them to be happy in their faith, even when undergoing the severest kind of affliction, while all their joys were heightened and hallowed. There is more than mere senti-

mental comfort; there is also real philosophical satisfaction, in the well-known lines of William Hiley Bathurst:

O for a faith that will not shrink,
Though pressed by many a foe;
That will not tremble on the brink
Of poverty or woe;

That will not murmur nor complain
Beneath the chastening rod,
But in the hour of grief or pain
Will lean upon its God.

A faith that shines more bright and clear
When tempests rage without;
That when in danger knows no fear,
In darkness feels no doubt;

A faith that keeps the narrow way
Till life's last hour is fled,
And with a pure and heavenly ray
Lights up a dying bed.

We feel sure that even the philosophical thinker, accustomed to intellectual processes, and rather dubious about yielding to any influence from the emotions, still would welcome the comfort, uplift, and sustaining power of such a faith as the poet describes.

V. The Author's Purpose Achieved.

The purpose with which the author set out at the beginning of this volume has been accomplished. How well or how poorly it has been done, must be left to the reader to decide. Our chief aim has been to show that Christianity is an adequate philosophy in the sense of presenting a rational World View; that it is the only philosophy which effectively explains the universe and all its varied phenomena; the only philosophy, too, that presents an adequate unifying principle and power to hold in coherency all the

diversified elements of the cosmos; and, moreover, the one philosophy that gives a satisfactory account of the origin, purpose, redemption, and destiny of mankind and of the universe. At the same time, Christianity is a satisfying and uplifting religion, adapted to the varied needs of all kinds and conditions of men.

CHAPTER XVI

CONFIRMATORY QUOTATIONS FROM VARIOUS WRITERS

The Primary Religious Source

But the question of the *primary* source of religious certitude is special, and ought to admit of some definite answer. Now, the proposition that best expresses my own belief in the matter may be stated as follows: Man is endowed by nature, and by virtue of his being a potential self-conscious being, with a religious consciousness, which is the organ and source of certain primary verities that constitute for him the first data of a possible religious experience. . . . That man, by virtue of being self-conscious, is also religious — that, in the same process by which he finds himself, he also finds his transcendent *other* — is, I feel sure, the only ultimate ground on which the claim that religion is a natural endowment of man can rest. — Alexander T. Ormond, *The Philosophy of Religion,* pp. 1, 3.

Relation of the Finite and the Infinite

But the agnostic conclusion of the absolute incompetence of reason to grasp the infinite has hidden in it the subtle assumption that there is no intelligible or possible link between the finite and the infinite. It is clear, however, that, were this the case, it would be strictly impossible to pass in thought from the finite to the infinite. In short, it would

be impossible for the finite reason of man to form any conception of the infinite. Such a conclusion is flatly in contradiction to the facts of experience. The fact that we not only conceive the infinite, but assert it as the necessary correlate of the finite, proves the distinction to be only relative and not absolute. — ALEXANDER T. ORMOND, *ibid.*, p. 30.

NATURE REVEALS PERSONALITY

There are many indications that Leibnitz was right when he suggested that this activity [that of matter and energy] is of the nature of mind. The physical changes of things are in accordance with laws that can be stated mathematically. It is rational in the sense that mind can know it and mind finds order in it. It is an interacting system that organizes many elements into rational wholes so as to realize ends, just as a mind does. A scientist, writing without any philosophical prejudice, has recently said that "atoms give one the impression of a delicacy and complexity of structure suggestive almost of the complexity of personality."[1] It has been the view of many philosophies and of most religions that the world of visible things is the expression to our mind of the activity of a Supreme Mind, so that nature is, as Berkeley says, a divine language. — EDGAR S. BRIGHTMAN, *An Introduction to Philosophy,* pp. 121, 122.

A CORRELATION OF ALL THE FACTS NEEDED

But is it not time to call a halt on the unlimited pretensions, not of science, but of some men of science? There is a tendency on the part of sociologists to make sociology cover everything; psychologists to make psychology everything — and this is true of each subdivision of psychology —

[1] Comstock in Comstock and Troland, *The Nature of Matter and Electricity,* p. 5.

normal, abnormal, social, and so on. [A "synoptic standpoint" is needed, says our author.] A biological pragmatism, then, is to be condemned for its narrowness; either it leaves out of account the points of view of other sciences, of universals, of values, and ideals, or else it approaches them from its single and restricted standpoint, which precludes a complete and adequate interpretation of their nature. . . .

Pragmatism remains a very significant movement, and one worthy of thorough investigation; but it is neither clear nor self-consistent nor inclusive. It calls attention to important aspects of experience that should not be ignored; but it neglects important aspects, and thus refutes itself. — E. S. BRIGHTMAN, *ibid.*, pp. 57, 58.

RELIGION DEMANDS TWO PERSONALITIES

Religion demands the mutual otherness of the finite and the infinite, in order that the relation of love and obedience may obtain. — BORDEN P. BOWNE, *Personalism*, p. 284.

PANTHEISM INADEQUATE

The system of Spinoza, strictly construed, leaves no place for a sense of fellowship or practical relationship with God. What incentive can there be to approach, or have any dealing with, a God who is declared to possess neither intellect nor will, and who entertains no designs in connection with the universe, final causes being "mere human figments"? As for love, the philosopher, it is true, speaks in terms of the "intellectual love" of God as exercised toward men. But what kind of a love can he mean to denote? The very phrase, *intellectual love,* is strangely inappropriate to a Being to whom intellect is denied. . . . To all human apprehension it must be colder than a moonbeam, and might just

as well be called by any other name so far as inviting to confidence and fellowship is concerned. — HENRY C. SHELDON, *Pantheistic Dilemmas and Other Essays in Philosophy and Religion,* pp. 32, 33.

AN ESTIMATE OF BERGSON

In our estimate of Bergson's system the balance has inclined to the side of adverse criticism. Not a few of his leading propositions fail to commend themselves as valid or well-founded. But this should not be taken as implying that the study of his philosophy is not rewarding. It is adapted to afford a good measure of intellectual stimulus. Moreover, it contains valuable points. Bergson argues cogently against the theory of mechanical or physical determination of mental acts. . . . His philosophy as a whole may not afford a consistent and reliable offset to materialism; but, if we may judge by actual results among contemporaries, it has a certain adaptation to promote the impression that the materialistic interpretation of reality is untenable.— HENRY C. SHELDON, *ibid.,* p. 104.

A FINITE AND CHANGING GOD

The given conception of God [that of William James and others, that God is finite and changing] — as is also that which makes Him simply the blindly working ground of the evolutionary movement — is just about on the level with atheism. It neither solicits to worship nor invites to confidence. A finite entity, which is not supported by a true infinite, may conceivably reach a culmination, and thereafter follow the path of deterioration. So practically runs the story of a mythological deity in more than one instance. . . . A God who is worthy of the name must be regarded as fundamental to the entire world order. If He may be sup-

posed to work in an inconsistent and self-contradictory manner, the foundations of intellectual confidence are disrupted. One whose God is in process of making might possibly be brave enough to hope for a good outcome to the system of things; but from a rational point of view he walks on insecure ground. . . . Our confidence can obtain firm anchorage only in the thought of One who is the *same yesterday, today, and forever.* — HENRY C. SHELDON, *ibid.*, pp. 116, 117.

PERSONALITY DERIVED ONLY FROM PERSONALITY

Man being a personal product, the cause of man must also be a personal Power. The simple statement of this step shows its logical soundness and necessity, and there is no escape from it. The Power that produced man must at the least and the lowest be personal, whatever the process, whether by evolution or otherwise, by which the effect was caused. If this Power is not personal, then it has produced in man something higher than itself, and thereby the cause falls short of the effect, and something has come out of nothing. — JAMES H. SNOWDEN, *The Personality of God*, pp. 17, 18.

THE INCONSISTENCY OF AGNOSTICISM

Agnosticism is equally fatal to all knowledge, including knowledge of its own principle. If the human mind is fundamentally an untrustworthy and perverse organ of knowledge, it cannot truly know anything, not even the fact that it cannot know. Such denial of knowledge must deny its own denial, and thereby cancel itself. Agnosticism literally commits suicide, and then strangely keeps on talking. — JAMES H. SNOWDEN, *ibid.*, pp. 56, 57.

The Absolute and the Relative

The absolute is not necessarily that which is released from all relations, but that which is released from all necessary relations or dependence imposed upon it from without. It may itself initiate any relations it chooses, and still be absolute, for such relations are not imposed upon it so as to destroy its absoluteness, but it constitutes them and so remains absolute. If the absolute were denied or lacked the power of constituting relations, such inability would itself limit, and thereby destroy, the absoluteness of the absolute. In the same way, the infinite is not that which has no limitations, but that which has no necessary limitations imposed upon it from without. It still has the power of assuming limitations of its own, but such limitations are still within its own power, and are not real limitations to infinitude. The lack of such power would be a real limitation to the infinite — James H. Snowden, *ibid.*, pp. 59, 60.

Divine Personality No Limitation

Personality is not a limitation, but an additional power. The opposition of self and not-self is not a necessary relation. This relation is generally present in our human experience. Our consciousness of self, though it begins with, does not depend on, our consciousness of a not-self, but is an immediate experience. The opposition of subject and object is a necessary relation of personality, at least in our experience of personality, but this relation may be internal to the constitution of personality itself. The self is at once subject and object, and thus experiences this relation in itself. The infinite personality of God may be based on this relation, and yet not pass into dependence on any external object. . . . Personality is the power to know and feel and act, and this ability is not a limitation, but an enormous ex-

pansion of power. The absence of such power would itself be a limitation beyond any other conceivable lack. — JAMES H. SNOWDEN, *ibid.*, pp. 60, 61.

LOTZE'S CLASSIC ARGUMENT

Selfhood, the essence of personality, does not depend upon any opposition that either has happened or is happening of the Ego to the Non-Ego, but consists in an immediate self-existence which constitutes the basis of the possibility of that contrast whenever it appears. Self-consciousness is the elucidation of this self-existence which is brought about by means of knowledge, and even this is by no means necessarily bound up with the distinction of the Ego from the Non-Ego which is substantially opposed to it. [After speaking of the necessary limitations of finite personalities, Lotze continues:] We do not find this limitation in the being of the infinite; hence for it alone is there possible self-existence, which needs neither to be initiated nor to be continuously developed by something not self, but which maintains itself within itself with spontaneous action that is eternal and had no beginning. Perfect personality is in God only. — R. H. LOTZE, *Microcosmus,* quoted by SNOWDEN, *ibid.*, pp. 62, 63.

THE CENTRALITY OF CHRIST

The view indicated in the title [see title of the author's book below] is that which has its center in the divine and human person of the Lord Jesus Christ. It implies the true divinity as well as the true humanity of the Christian Redeemer. . . . He who with his whole heart believes in Jesus as the Son of God is thereby committed to much else besides. He is committed to a view of God, to a view of man, to a view of sin, to a view of redemption, to a view of the purpose of God in creation and history, to a view of human

destiny, found only in Christianity. This forms a *Weltanschauung*, or "Christian View of the World," which stands in marked contrast with theories wrought out from a purely philosophical or scientific viewpoint. — JAMES ORR, *The Christian View of God and the World*, p. 4.

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF MAN

The Christian doctrine of God and the Christian doctrine of man are in fact correlatives. For how should man know that there is a personal, ethical, self-revealing God — how should he be able to form the conception of such a Being, or to attach any meaning to the terms employed to express His existence — unless he were himself a rational and moral, a spiritual personality? The two views imply each other, and stand or fall together. We may express this second postulate of the Christian view in the words, Man was made in the image of God. — JAMES ORR, *ibid.*, p. 119.

THE INCARNATION AND THE DIVINE IMAGE IN MAN

Not only in the Christian view in general, but especially in the great central doctrine of the Incarnation, is this truth of man made in the image of God seen to be implied. . . . Thus a union between the divine and human is seen to be possible, to the intimacy of which no limits can be set — which, indeed, reaches its perfection only when it becomes personal. The Incarnation has not only this doctrine as its presupposition — it is, besides, the highest proof of its truth. Christ, in His own person, is the demonstration of the Bible doctrine of man. . . . Christ is the best of humanity. He is not only the revelation of God to humanity, but the revelation of humanity to itself. In Him we see in perfect form what man in the divine idea of him is. We see how man is made in the image of God, and how humanity is con-

stituted to be the perfect organ for the revelation of the divine. — JAMES ORR, *ibid.*, pp. 120, 121.

THE DIVINE IMMUTABILITY

The immutability of God is a fixed and fundamental principle; but immutability does not mean immobility. God is in nature, character and purpose unchangeable; but in attitude and modes of action He is as varied as the infinite needs of changeful man. For He could not be invariable in mind and end, unless He were variable in the use and application of His energies. — A. M. FAIRBAIRN, *The Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, p. 159.

WHY MORAL AGENTS WERE CREATED

Moral freedom, therefore, must belong to the only creature capable of being regarded with complacency by the Creator. . . . Were He only an architect, a skillful builder, or a cunning maker of watches, which, once adjusted and wound up, could go on for ages, He might be satisfied with a universe of this sort; but if He were so easily satisfied, then the very depth of His satisfaction would be the measure of His imperfection; for it would argue Him void of those moral qualities which we conceive most essential to goodness. . . . We come, therefore, to the conclusion that the only creation worthy of a personal God is a universe of persons; and persons born as potentialities who can be educated by experience, awakened to reason, and persuaded to obedience. — A. M. FAIRBAIRN, *ibid.*, p. 158.

THE PERSISTENCE OF THE EGO

While it cannot tell the exact nature of this Ego, consciousness affirms with absolute certainty that an Ego exists; that the I who sleeps, who thinks, who hears, who walks,

is not a number of different subjects, but is one and the same identical subject. Moreover, this Ego continues to exist and to perceive amidst the manifold changes of daily life. . . . It is true that consciousness does not tell us in what the Ego consists, but it does inform us, and in no uncertain accents, that the Ego exists. . . . Memory is impossible on any other supposition than the permanent existence of an unchanging substance, which is itself subject to many changes. The I who thinks and wills and perceives is the same I who thought ten years ago. No fact of my mental life is more certain than this. — JAMES H. RYAN, *An Introduction to Philosophy*, pp. 99, 100.

THE PRESENT STATUS OF DUALISM IN PSYCHOLOGY

One more word as to the status of Dualism among present-day thinkers. Far from being an "outgrown theory," Dualism never had so many and such prominent defenders as it boasts at the present time. The reaction against both materialism and monism has definitely set in, as is evidenced by the increased number of thinkers who are entering the lists in behalf of Dualism. Certainly no one would accuse the following of being unacquainted with the results of modern science; yet each one of them has either openly defended Interactionism or felt himself unable to agee with Parallelism in any of its forms. I refer to Lotze, G. Stumpf, Busse, Bergson, Kuelpe, Ward, William James, Sedgwick, Bradley, Ladd, Schiller, Taylor, Driesch, McDougall, Sheldon, Pratt, and Lovejoy. These thinkers are neither theologians nor writers of popular manuals of devotion. If they can perceive in Interactionism, or if they cannot perceive in Parallelism, a satisfactory explanation of the relations of man to the universe, then it scarcely behooves anyone to refer to this theory as an outgrown scholastic superstition.

. . . Interaction is a sound theory, whether viewed from the side of physical science or of psychology. It is, moreover, the only theory which satisfactorily explains human personality and the place of man in the cosmos.[2] — JAMES H. RYAN, *ibid.*, pp. 107, 108.

THE AIM OF PHILOSOPHY

The aim of philosophy is to inquire into the "wholeness of things," that is, things are studied apart from the narrow relations which make them either particular or temporary. No particular thing, but things; no individual phenomenon, but the universe as a whole; no temporary relation, but the eternal unchanging relations of things to one another and to the universe — this is the content of philosophy. And the mental attitude of the philosopher towards this "wholeness," or towards the universe, may be characterized as an attempt to comprehend it all and in its totality. Of course, this does not mean that the philosopher hopes to know the world as a whole, quantitatively. Such a venture is manifestly impossible. He can, however, gather together the scattered fragments of knowledge, the assumptions and principles which are common to all the sciences, bind them into an intelligent whole, and from this intellectual organization of the world of thought and of action, arrive at which the Germans so aptly call a "Welt- und Lebens-anschauung" — a world view and life view. — JAMES H. RYAN, *ibid.*, p. 5.

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[2] Professor Ryan is very fair. He presents the arguments for and against monism and other theories, and even treats Dualism and Interaction in the same critical way; but in the end he cogently upholds the reality of both mind and body and their marvelous and intimate reciprocity.

The Individual and Society

There will be no solution of this current conflict so long as we suppose society to be one thing and the individual quite another. The individual is nothing by himself, and society is nothing by itself. The goal of human progress is not society in the abstract at the expense of the individual, for such an abstraction simply does not exist, save as an abstraction. A society that annuls the individuals that make it possible annuls itself, as history attests. Nor is the goal of progress the self-realization of each individual at the expence of and abstracted from society; for neither does there exist such an abstracted individual. A rational moral order announces that the end of human endeavor is neither the individual nor society, for the simple reason that it is both. It means the realization of the individual through society and of society through the individual; the welfare of neither can be sundered from that of the other. — Jay W. Hudson, *The Truths We Live By,* pp. 37, 38.

Inadequacy of the Unknowable God

Neither God as the mere Unknowable, nor God as the Totality of Things, has aroused much enthusiasm among men. Scant religious comfort has come from them, and they will be found upon examination to possess little moral value. Whenever men have been deeply impressed by such ideas of God, something has been quite unconsciously added to these conceptions, which, moreover, science in no way warrants. The cry of a soul in dire despair, "O my God!" can scarcely be translated into, "O my Unknowable!" or, "O my Totality of Things!" without suspicion of absurdity. . . . For, plainly, neither of these gods can be said to be even good. The goodness of the Unknowable is surely as unknowable as anything else about it; and concerning

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the goodness of the Totality of Things, science can say nothing, for, as has been made plain, it deals ever with the question of what things *are,* not with the ideals of goodness, or what things *ought* to be. — JAY W. HUDSON, *ibid.,* pp. 166, 167.

THE HUMAN QUEST FOR GOD

Human thought in its ultimate aim is really a quest after God. It seeks for a unity in the endless variety of the world, and for a fundamental truth which shall explain all things. The speculative thought of the physical scientists is not satisfied to rest with the many and variety forces and forms with which they deal, but affirms an infinite and eternal energy of which all forces and forms are but the ever-changing manifestation. Ascribe personality and moral character to this infinite and eternal energy, and we may rightly name it God. — M. BROSS THOMAS, *The Biblical Idea of God,* pp. 3, 4.

THE UNITY OF BIBLICAL TEACHING

The question now arises, How can we account for the continuity throughout successive ages of this unfolding idea of a moral and redemptive God, if the books which contain it are made up of shreds and patches? For such they are if much of modern criticism is accepted. The polychrome, or many-colored, edition of some of the Biblical books, notably that of Judges, in clear and definite outline, shows this. Each assumed source has a distinctive color, and each assumed editor or redactor is in like manner indicated. This extends even to single connective words. But among so many different revisers, belonging to widely different periods, how is it that there has resulted such unity of thought and continuity of development? There must have been one

presiding mind determining it all, and that mind, as the author of Hebrews tells us, must have been the mind of God. This is required to explain the essential harmony of the books which really make up the Bible. — M. Bross Thomas, *ibid.*, pp. 189, 190.

A Classic Definition of Philosophy

Philosophy is the search for a comprehensive view of nature, an attempt at a universal explanation of things. It is both the summary of the sciences and their completion; both general science and a specialty distinguished from science proper; and, like its elder sisters, religion and poetry, forms a separate branch among the manifestations of the human mind. The different sciences have special groups of facts for their subject matter, and seek to discover the causes of these phenomena, or to formulate the laws according to which they are produced. In philosophy, on the other hand, the human mind endeavors to rise beyond such groups and their particular laws, and to explain the world as a whole, or *the universal fact or phenomenon,* by the cause of the causes, or the first cause. In other words, it attempts to answer the question, Why does this world exist, and how does it happen to be what it is? — Alfred Weber, *History of Philosophy* (translated by Frank Thilly), p. 1.

The Disease and Its Remedy

Everything turns on what is really wrong [with man], for when that is known, it is possible to discuss the ways of making it right. When a religion offers "salvation" to man, it must be made clear what danger threatened or what wrong condition existed. If one believes that what is wrong is merely ignorance, then the way to save men is to instruct them. If the trouble is weakness, then all that is needed is

more strength. If the evil is merely the reminder of earlier and pre-human conditions, "remnants of the ape and tiger," then salvation will consist of patience to wait until further development eliminates these reminders. If the trouble of life is a burden in an earlier incarnation, then salvation will lie in acquiring an excess of merit during this incarnation. If moral evil is merely an illusion, salvation will consist in correcting the mental attitude. . . . The Christian faith finds sin as the cause of the wrong relation between man and God, and finds the root of sin in selfishness — a self-assertion of man in disregard of his true relationship to God and his fellows.[3] — CLELAND B. MCAFEE, *The Christian Conviction,* pp. 132, 133.

THE GENESIS OF SIN

The damage of sin within the man consists of the disordering of his powers, disturbing the inner harmony, and so producing unrest. . . . The Christian Scriptures describe the beginning of sin in the human order in just this form. Interpreters of the account differ as to its historical occurrence, but they agree on its psychological and volitional accuracy. The incident tells us that the earliest human beings found themselves in the presence of a tree of whose fruit they were forbidden to eat, the will of God to that effect having become perfectly clear to them. But they found the fruit, to all seeming, good to eat — a distinct appeal to the physical motive. It was also beautiful to look upon — an appeal to the esthetic motive. It was to be desired to make one wise — an appeal to the intellectual motive and to ambition for progress. All these were perfectly proper

[3] The author subsequently shows in a most effective argument that the only adequate remedy for the evil is the Christian method through the incarnation and atonement of the Son of God accepted by faith.

appeals, and it is right and necessary that they be recognized and obeyed under proper conditions. But neither of them is the highest or most distinctive reason for human conduct. Above them stands a motive which represents man's highest relationship, the point at which he comes into contact with the moral universe where God is the supreme personality with whom man is to hold fellowship. That motive operated against taking the fruit, as the incident is recorded, and it was made unmistakably clear. The beginning of sin was when this highest motive was flouted and denied, and lower motives were given the right of way. Then came inevitable disorder in the nature of the offenders, the hierarchy of rational motives being overturned. And that is the natural history of every sin from the beginning until now, and the same outcome is inevitable. Selfishness conflicts with the balance of power in man.[4] — CLELAND B. MCAFEE, *ibid.*, pp. 134-136.

THE DIVINE IMAGE IN MAN

As respects man's nature, the resemblance to God cannot be looked for, as just said, in his body, nor in the animal functions of his soul. It must be looked for, therefore, in that higher constitution of his being which makes him spiritual. It is in the powers and activities of man as a personal spirit that we are to see his affinity to God and resemblance to Him. The image of God intended in Scripture, in other words, is a mental and moral image. It is to be sought for in the fact that man is a person — a spiritual, self-conscious being; and in the attributes of that personality: his rationality and capacity for moral life, including in the latter knowledge of moral law, self-determining free-

[4] The Christian method, by restoring fellowship between God and man, readjusts that "balance of power in man."

dom and social affection; highest of all, his capacity for fellowship with God. — JAMES ORR, *God's Image in Man,* pp. 56, 57.

NOTES ON THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF CHRIST

Lastly, the denial of the virgin birth leads logically to the denial of God's love. . . . It is true that God's love manifests itself in many ways . . . but who are we to deprive God of the greatest expression of love, which is sacrifice? Who would forbid God to have this supreme glory?

But how can God sacrifice Himself if He cannot "empty Himself"? How can He make us rich if He cannot become poor? How can He give the most, if He cannot give His very self? . . .

Without the virgin birth-and all that this miracle implies, this marvelous gospel is nothing but hollow mockery, an insult to true love, a caricature of real sacrifice; for we are compelled, if Jesus is not God, to say: God loved the world so little that He did not give Himself for its salvation. Would this be love? Would it be the love above all loves, the love which reveals love, the love that is to fill the earth with hope and heaven with adoration? . . . Where shall we go to see love and to learn love, if we cannot see and learn it from the incarnate God? None but the God of the incarnation and the crucifixion can teach self-denial to the selfish world. — W. H. GUITON, *The Princeton Theological Review,* July, 1927, pp. 415, 416.

CHRIST THE THEANTHROPIC PERSON

Shall we say that God ceases to be God when He becomes man by means of the virgin birth? [To this question the writer replies:] When Paul says that Christ "emptied Himself" (Phil 2:6-8), he surely does not mean that He ceased

to be God. Persistence of personality is the essential condition of sacrifice — sacrifice brings changes in the condition, not in the heart. Who can impose a limit to His power? He who created man can become man; He who created humanity can enter into humanity, without losing in any way His eternal nature. Truly He is able to take the human form without forsaking the divine attributes. . . . Would the God of salvation become unworthy of Himself when He is working in poverty and agony the wonders of our salvation? — W. H. GUITON, *ibid.*, p. 414.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE VIRGIN BIRTH

Why did the Holy Spirit perform the act of the miraculous conception of the Son of God in the womb of the Virgin Mary? Why did not the Son Himself perform that sacred function? There is always a divine rationality in the ways of God. It was the Son, not the Father or the Holy Spirit, who was to be passive in the act of the incarnation, who was to make the great surrender; in other words, who was to empty Himself, which is the meaning of the *Kenosis.* Therefore the Son submitted willingly and sacrificially to the dominion of the Holy Spirit, who enwrapped and enshrined Him (the person, the Ego, of the Son) in human nature that He might function in and through human nature for the purpose of human redemption. Thus the Son surrendered Himself gladly and completely to the will of the Father and to the brooding care and guidance of the Holy Spirit. — LEANDER S. KEYSER, *Contending for the Faith,* p. 260.

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